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Islamabad Hosts Economic Cooperation Conference

Iran's Velayati on ECO Objectives

NC1303081995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati arrived in Islamabad last night at the head of a delegation to participate in the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] session. Speaking to our correspondent in Islamabad, Dr. Velayati commented on the objectives of the ECO ministerial and summit sessions in Islamabad.

At last year's summit session, preliminary concurrence was reached on four important plans for shipping, banking, insurance, and aviation and these plans were ratified at the ministerial session in Ashgabat.

Foreign Minister Velayati added: The implementation phase of these important plans will begin after approval at the ECO session in Islamabad. Dr. Velayati stated: Two other plans will also be implemented after their final approval at the summit session in Islamabad. They were initially approved at the Ashgabat ECO ministerial session and concern the establishment of the ECO cultural center in Tehran and the ECO scientific center in Pakistan.

Velayati Views Foreign Ministers' Session

NC1403071395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The two-day summit of the 10 member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO], which is to approve bills on navigation, aviation, banking, and insurance, will convene in Islamabad, Pakistan in an hour. The draft bills were approved by the foreign ministers of the member countries last night.

Our correspondent Khameneh reports from Islamabad on the outcome of the ECO foreign ministerial session, which ended in Islamabad last night.

[Begin recording] [Khameneh] During their meeting, which continued late into the night, the ECO foreign ministers approved the agenda of the third ECO summit, an agenda prepared at various meetings of experts with the objective of expanding economic and cultural cooperation among the ECO members. Foreign Minister Velayati commented on the session's decisions:

[Velayati] The session endorsed the report on the outcome of the meetings of the member countries' high-level experts. ECO aviation, navigation, a development and commerce bank, and an insurance company, the general principles of which were approved by member country heads last year and the various expert, technical, and operational phases of which were examined in a year, were approved during the Ashgabat session. During the current session an agenda including all these things was approved by taking into consideration the problems involved in the implementation of these plans and the finalization of a document that should be approved by the 10 member countries' summit. [end recording]

[Announcer] Velayati said these plans involve many intricate details and were approved by the session after examining the problems that each member country had. Our foreign minister also said: The formation of the ECO cultural association session in Iran and of the scientific association in Pakistan, extending facilities for travel by businessmen among the member countries, as well as extending visa and consulate facilities, were also among the issues approved by the ECO foreign ministerial session last night.

Bhutto Speaks at Opening of Summit

BK1403093795 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 0518 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Speech by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto at the inaugural session of the third summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad—live]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] I thank you for conferring on me the honor of chairing the third ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] summit meeting. I am confident that with your support, our meeting will make a significant contribution to the progress of regional cooperation under the auspices of the ECO.

Presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers of the ECO member states; excellencies; ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan, I welcome our distinguished guests to the springtime of political and economic rebirth in Islamabad. May the colors and the fragrance of the season be of special welcome from our people, our city, and our nation.

In the tapestry of history, our strong cultural and trading ties, our religious bonds, our mutual goals and objectives have overlapped together into a rich a communal clock. Our poetry, our literature, our songs, our dances, our legends reflect the community of our nation the brotherhood of our people. This common heritage has given us the collective political will and the modus operandi for further regional cooperation and integration among our 10 countries.

Excellencies, the cleansing winds of economic liberalization and free trade are sweeping through the world. We all stand at the threshold of a rapidly changing post-Cold War order: a post-modern political era of complexities that has replaced the simplistic polarities of the old East-West confrontation. Powerful regional organizations for economic cooperation like the European Community, the North Atlantic [as heard] Free Trade Association, ASEAN, and APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] are replacing NATO and Warsaw pacts as the defining themes of the new millennium which awaits us. Markets have replaced missiles as the measure of might. The 10 nations of the ECO must take full advantage of the new worldwide economic trend by maximizing regional economic cooperation. Our natural resources potential can only be realized when we work together to develop economic competitiveness in the world marketplace. We need to educate and train our people so that they will have the skills in the modern marketplace to provide for their children and to end the cycle of poverty that plagues us in the developing world.

Together, our population comprise over 300 million people. Together, we live in an enormous land mass spanning 7 million square km. We are indeed an economic force to be reckoned with in the post-Cold War era. By realizing the full potentialities of our economy, we can, God willing, turn our people's hopes into substantive achievements in the emerging economic order.

Excellencies, just two years ago we took the historic decision to enlarge the membership of the ECO to include Afghanistan and the six newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucuses. In these two years, we drew up plans in the Istanbul Declaration and the Quetta Plan of Action for the development of infrastructure in our region. We are exploring joint ventures for trade. Progress toward the realization of these goals may be slow, but we must make sure that we are heading in the right direction—first step in a long and arduous journey toward closer cooperation.

On the eve of our meeting, excellencies, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan made an agreement in Islamabad opening the Karakoram Highway, which was the original Silk Route for trade with the outside world. With this agreement, an era of much contested search for warm waters has been brought to a peaceful denouement. During our summit meeting, we plan to sign an agreement for facilitating transit trade through the ECO region.

Our national development plans already reflect the highest priority accorded to the development of infrastructure links within the ECO region. The people's government of Pakistan has already allocated 500 million rupees for upgrading the Karakoram Highway into a modern all-weather road. This road will link us directly into the Kyrgyz Republic and through Kyrgyzstan into Central Asia. In anticipation of the stabilization of Afghanistan, we have drawn up plans for reconstruction of highway system as well as a prefeasibility for a railway link integrating Pakistan's rail network with that of Central Asia through Afghanistan and through Turkmenistan. We are already expanding rail and road link between Iran and Pakistan, which will link us through Iran into Central Asia. The potential also exists for building a road across the Wakhan border in Afghanistan into Tajikistan, which will be yet another route into Central Asia. These measures are aimed at providing the shortest outlet to the sea for our Central Asian neighbors. Similar measures, I believe, are underway in Turkey and in Iran which will help boost southward trade traffic considerably. Such links will also promote people-to-people contacts essential for joint ventures and for creating awareness of trading opportunities. For us in Pakistan, there has been a dramatic increase in the regional aviation links. Regular air services are now available virtually to most ECO countries. Air travel has become simple and safe.

Unfortunately, prospects for economic development are often overshadowed by conflicts and turbulence. Our region manifests human tragedy—the suffering of the people of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kashmir, and Tajikistan. The continuing human tragedy is an avoidable impediment to the process of development, promotion of trade, and investment in our region.

The ECO countries need to take a firm stand against terrorism. Terrorism and civil war are evil (?force) that threaten the well- being of all our people. It stands between our region and full integration into the new technology of the new century, the modern miracle of the third millennium.

Pakistan seeks peaceful and cooperative relations with all its neighbors. We are still burdened with the lingering legacy of colonialism—the baggage of the aborted agenda of partition, which continues to bedevil our relations with India. For over five years an indigenous uprising has erupted in the Indian occupied Kashmir. It is an Intifada for the basic and universal rights for self-determination. This struggle for freedom has unfortunately evoked a draconian response from New Delhi, making a mockery of human rights. Pakistan is a direct party to the Kashmir dispute as recognized by the United Nations. We have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to convince India to allow the international community to implement Security Council resolution guaranteeing the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to decide whether they wish to accede to India or to Pakistan. Until the basic right of self-determination is implemented, genuine peace in South Asia will continue to elude our grasp.

After a decade-long miraculous fight against repression and occupation by the communist superpower, peace unfortunately still eludes the long-suffering people of Afghanistan. The continuing fratricide is an ongoing cause of concern to all of us. We continue to work with the United Nations and with the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] to achieve peaceful conditions in Afghanistan.

We fully support the process of bringing peace and stability in Tajikistan through the good offices of the United Nations secretary general.

The aggression in Azerbaijan needs to be reversed. It is causing sympathy and concern in Islamabad as elsewhere in the ECO region. All such efforts will, we hope, promote peace and stability in the region.

Our region has been blessed by God with an abundance of resources—oil, gas, coal, hydroelectricity, various minerals, as well as industrial and agricultural goods.

Our economies must generate adequate investment funds, acquire managerial skills geared to the market economy, and in the case of our new member states develop alternate routes of access to world markets. We have taken some steps to meet these challenges. Pakistan has offered training facilities at our training institutions. We have provided supplier credit to our ECO partners. However, we need to develop a more coherent approach to resolving these problems, including joint efforts to secure capital resources from international institutions and private sector investment.

I may recall here that the new trading regime under WTO [World Trade Organization] envisages flow of services just like the flow of other commodities. We therefore need to focus on the services in our join deliberations in planning for regional integration. Clearly we are in different stages of development, but we are all undergoing rapid change. There is much that we can do individually and some of that restructuring which we need to do may be difficult. Maybe some of the economic decisions that we need to take are painful. Nevertheless, we have to proceed with the market agenda of the new millennium and we can so proceed on the basis of regional integration.

With increased involvement of the private sector in development activity, our government needs to redefine regulatory functions. We need to simplify procedures. We need to provide necessary economic information and produce an environment which is conducive to regional economic cooperation. Pakistan fully recognizes the merits of the South-South cooperation and worldwide regionalization of economies in the EC, ASEAN, NAFTA, and APEC. Regional economic development is a necessary prerequisite to peace and stability. Economic development and political development need to proceed together. We must never have to choose between the two.

The imperatives of regional cooperation have never been better than in the rapidly changing environment of today. The establishment of a group of eminent persons for enhancing ECO is a welcome step. Let me compliment the ECO ministers and senior officials for their contribution at the meetings of the councils of ministers and senior officials. Important decisions were taken there. We hope that at Islamabad summit, major agreements on the simplification of visa procedures for the businessmen of ECO countries, ECO Trade and Development Bank, ECO Shipping Company, and ECO Air will be signed to build an institutional basis for economic collaboration. The Treaty of Izmir envisages the establishment of a reinsurance company. We expect to arrive at a decision about its establishment in the near future. I express our appreciation to the secretary general of ECO for his dedication and contribution to the work of the organization.

Following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, global trade has entered a new phase. The ECO countries need to evaluate the implementation of this development with particular reference to the World Trade Organization and the newly liberalized trading environment in which the ECO countries will have to operate and to compete.

Excellencies, our region is capable of taking a quantum leap into an unchartered future—a future of unlimited opportunity; a future of infinite hope. We have already enshrined the political will for this extraordinary new era in the Istanbul Declaration and the Quetta Plan of Action. We now need to mobilize, jointly and individually, financial resources as well as technical skills to secure timely implementation of our common objectives. The task before us is surely not easy, but this is a remarkable time of transition and transformation and the decisions that we take can affect the lives of our people and the very future of our nations as we cross into a new millennium. The time demands innovation. The time demands boldness. The time demands courage. As it was said long ago, the only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith.

I thank you, distinguished guests.

'Text' of Rafsanjani Speech

LD1403165395 Tehran IRNA in English 1452 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 14, IRNA—What follows is the text of Iranian President, Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's address at the summit meet of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) here today.

"It is indeed a great pleasure to meet again the honorable heads of states, governments and high authorities of friendly countries of ECO. It's also heartening to witness the holding of the third Economic Cooperation Organization summit. I hope that with this valuable opportunity initiated for exchange of views on regional and international developments we will be able to achieve very useful results.

"I would like to begin by offering my congratulations on your election as chairperson of this important gathering and express my personal appreciation and that of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the efforts of the government and officials of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in hosting this august meeting. I pray to the Almighty Allah for the success and prosperity of the government and the noble nation of Pakistan.

"The world around us is undergoing rapid economic and political transformation, and at a time when scientific developments have taken an increasing accelerated pace, regional cooperation has become one of the essential and reliable instruments for development and progress.

"The ECO region with an area of more than seven million square kilometers, is endowed with rich and varied natural resources and necessary manpower and expertise. In addition to these conducive factors, our age-old common cultural and historical links have created immutable bonds of amity and solidarity among our peoples. Each of these factors alone can play an important role for the economic development of the region. The only dark point that has cast its shadow on this bright horizon is the existence of certain international and external, political tensions and conflicts which imperil the peace and security in our part of the world. Conflicts that have been imposed on Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan have depleted the resources of these nations and have hampered their efforts toward economic development.

"Unfortunately the existent groups and parties in Afghanistan have not been able to set their differences aside and find a permanent solution for their problems and establish a stable and independent government. The Islamic Republic of Iran has supported the people of Afghanistan by hosting millions of Afghan refugees. We have also stated our readiness to continue humanitarian aid and to work for a comprehensive political solution that will serve the interests of all segments of Afghan population and groups.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has followed closely the grave situation in Kashmir and is deeply concerned over the continuation of the plight of the people of this region. Iran has consistently sought the end of violence and has supported a political settlement in consonance with the aspirations and will of the oppressed Kashmiri people.

"The crisis in Tajikistan entered a promising phase with the signing of the Tehran cease-fire agreement. The cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Nations, Russian Federation and other regional countries, serve as good pattern of regional cooperation for the peaceful settlement of crisis. We believe that the cease-fire and continuation of the peace negotiation is the most suitable way to achieve national reconciliation and establish a durable and just peace in this country.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a neighbor to the two countries of Azerbaijan and Armenia, has launched an extensive effort to bring about peace and security in the Caucasus. We welcome all peace plans and believe the end of occupation of Azeri territory by Armenian forces is one of the instruments for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

"The situation in the strategic region of the Persian Gulf is another important issue. The importance of this region has caused continuous intervention by outside forces and creation of a center of crisis. The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently emphasized that the cardinal prerequisite for peace, stability and security in the region is the solidarity and unity among the countries of the Persian Gulf region. Specially since, age old historical and cultural ties bind the nations of this region together. [as received]

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that creation of tension and conflicts wreaks havoc and irreparable damage on the fragile economies of the nations and impedes the strengthening of foundation for cooperative economic relations. For this reason, we are desirous to see the member countries of ECO enjoy political stability and internal security. We believe ECO will gain power under peace and stability, and the arrogant imperialist powers will not be able to so easily pursue their ominous designs by creating unjust wars and political upheavals.

"A sound and flourishing economy is an important element for political stability, ECO with its potential and actual capability and resources provides a good opportunity to us to attain a prosperous economy and true independence.

"In my meetings with the respected heads of the ECO countries, all have emphasized their desire to cooperate in the framework of ECO, and I am hopeful that with the personal supervision of Your Excellencies early realization of the goals set by ECO will be facilitated.

"Fortunately, in the intervening time between the two summits, ECO has taken dynamic and great strides forward. Firm steps have been taken toward materialization of joint regional projects. Without any doubt the active participation of all the member states in the joint regional projects shall bring about better results. We expect the distinguished heads of states and governments to remind the relevant officials of their countries that petty matters, creating obstruction and casting doubt on joint ECO projects cause division among the members and weaken our organization. It is therefore necessary that if small problems and difficulties emerge on the way of implementing joint projects, we work together for the removal of these impediments. In this line, and due to the present complications in trade relations we put forward the following proposals:

"1. Establishment of free trade zones within ECO region should be accorded high priority. These zones play an important role for promotion of trade among the member states. I raised this proposal during the last summit meeting and it was to be established to examine by the relevant committee.

"2. A preferential tariff scheme, the protocol for which was also signed, need further follow up by the relevant officials. Furthermore I propose that with the expanding the scope and extent of preferential tariffs we can move towards removal of impediments within a definite time frame, in say a period of ten years, so that we can have unrestricted flow of goods among member countries.

"3. A joint ECO exhibition for the purpose of exchanging the required information on available products in the member countries should be held. The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully prepared to hold the first ECO exhibition.

"4. Communication plays a vital role particularly for countries that have no access to the high seas. The plan for development of transportation and communication for the next 10 years, the draft of which has been submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran should receive top priority in order to pave the way for sustained development in all economic sectors.

"It is my pleasure to inform this important summit that in the next few days the Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway line will be inaugurated and Central Asian and Transcaucasus will thus be linked to the high seas through the Islamic Republic of Iran railways.

"Establishment of auxiliary facilities are instrumental in promoting inter regional trade. Drafting of the transit trade agreement and the agreement for granting business visas are very positive steps. We propose that those countries who have access to high seas accord special privileges to land-locked nations. Iran is fully prepared to lend a helping land.

"Establishment of ECO airline and ECO joint shipping company play a valuable role in development of trade and enhancement of scientific and cultural cooperation and will augur greater unity among the member states.

"The next step of ECO can be mobilization of national investments of the member countries and their use in mass production of goods by taking into account comparative advantages. No doubt, this cooperation will produce better and more concrete results for the industrial and agricultural sectors which requires the careful attention of the executive authorities. In this connection, with careful research and long-term planning the required grounds should be laid to facilitate the free flow of capital.

"Our common history and culture have latent and decisive impact on our joint cooperation. Commencement of the activities of the two centers, namely the science foundation and ECO cultural institute whose preliminary work has taken place ushers in new development in ECO. The success of these two centers depend on the multifaceted and all round cooperation of the relevant experts and concerned officials of the member countries.

"The broad spectrum of ECO activities, covering economic, scientific and cultural fields, will no doubt produce better results, with the cooperation of international organizations. The cooperation of these organizations with ECO in holding seminars, conferences or participation at annual meetings are beneficial and needs serious follow-up. It is expected that countries and international organizations, granting finance for developmental projects set aside a portion of their aid for development projects in the ECO region. With doing so all the ECO member states will benefit from this cooperation in a more effective way.

"Although with the accession of news members, ECO has taken great strides forward in implementation of joint projects, but perhaps the same with new incitements, and more convenient atmosphere for further cooperation was caused some complications. The emergence of a brighter and broader horizon for regional cooperation is a valuable factor for further cooperative relations and sustained development. Under the existing circumstances, ECO has the capacity to become a powerful economic bloc that can ensure the security and happiness of our people. The requisite for the attainment of this goal is regional outlook, political understanding, hard work and sometimes willingness to make sacrifices. Once again the Islamic Republic of Iran, while reiterating its readiness, seeks more than before cooperation of the members in joint projects for economic growth of ECO and welfare and tranquility of the people of the region.

"In conclusion, I would like to thank all the officials and experts that collaborated in finalizing different documents and thus paving the way for the implementation of a number of important ECO projects.

"I would like to once again thank the government and people of Pakistan for their warm and gracious hospitality and pray to the Almighty of God for the success of this meeting for attaining the desired goal."

Rafsanjani-Rabbani Meeting Reported

NC1403070795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani met President Hashemi-Rafsanjani in Islamabad this morning. Our correspondent, who has been dispatched to Islamabad, reports on this meeting:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] During this meeting Borhanoddin Rabbani described the latest situation and developments in Afghanistan and briefed the president on the steps state forces are taking to establish security and calm.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed regret over the fratricide in Afghanistan and stated: After long struggles against foreign occupiers and their victory in these struggles, the Muslim Afghan people need peace and tranquility so that, under the coordination and unity of the various Afghan jehadi groups, they can rebuild the destruction and damage of foreign occupation and civil wars. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated: Safeguarding the Afghan people's interests and striving for reconstruction and development constitute an important principle that should be considered with a sense of responsibility by committed and alert people far from group and factional fanaticism.

Reporting for the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran from Islamabad, Pakistan. [end recording]

Rafsanjani Receives Azeri Minister

LD1503163295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani received Azeri Foreign Minster Hasan Hasanov in his place of residence [in Islamabad] on the third day of his visit [to Pakistan].

At the meeting, the Azeri foreign minister conveyed the Azeri president and nation's best regards to Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani and called for further expansion of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan. He briefed the president on the situation in the Karabakh enclave and the results of measures undertaken for resolving the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani described as most favorable the grounds for the expansion of ties with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Voicing his concern over the failure to reach a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh issue, the president expressed the hope that with adroitness and proper management of the officials of the two countries of Armenia and Azerbaijan the issue be resolved as soon as possible.

Bhutto Makes Concluding Statement

BK1503151195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1358 GMT 15 Mar 95

[Statement by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto at the concluding ceremony of the ECO Summit in Islamabad; monitored in progress—live]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ... We can go ahead with that and now I declare the meeting closed. I will start the press conference with a statement and then we are here to answer questions from the members of the press. All the delegations are present.

I believe I speak for all my colleagues when I say that the third ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] summit has been successful. The work that we have done provides a concrete framework for regional cooperation. Major agreements on establishing ECO trade and development bank, ECO shipping company, ECO air, and ECO reinsurance company have been signed. These institutions have been envisaged under the Izmir Treaty and they are necessary to provide an institutional base on which a super structure of projects for economic development can be built. The ECO bank will provide financing for intraregional trade and for joint ventures. ECO shipping and ECO air will increase the flow of people and goods within the region.

Other significant agreements signed covered ECO transit trade and simplification of visa procedures for the businessmen of our country. The charter of the ECO cultural institute and the science foundation have also been signed. The cultural institute will be located in Tehran and will take measures to promote greater cultural understanding among the member-countries. The science foundation will be based in Islamabad and assist in raising a reservoir of skilled, technical manpower in the ECO region. ECO countries are to take necessary measures nationally to ensure close monitoring of follow-up action and adherence to the timeframe for the implementation of the decisions of the organization.

The Islamabad Declaration, of which copies are available, recognizes the historic responsibility of the ECO leaders to fulfill the aspirations of 300 million people of our region by improving the quality of life, promoting economic growth, and environment-friendly development. The declaration reflects our resolve to give special priority to the development of infrastructure facilities, promotion of trade, strengthening of energy-related cooperation, and protection of the environment. We have also endorsed a decision regarding the establishment of an Eminent Persons Group, that is EPG. The EPG will propose measures for the enhancement of the effectiveness of ECO.

During the retreat this morning, the ECO summit leaders held candid discussions on various issues confronting the region. The talks were held in a spirit of great cordiality and were highly constructive. Afghanistan, Kashmir, the situation in Azerbaijan, and the ECO were among the issues which have been discussed.

On Afghanistan, the president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan gave an account of the current situation and extensive discussions followed. All leaders agreed on the urgency of the settlement of the Afghan problem which is vital to peace, stability, and progress of the whole region. We agreed that the UN peace efforts in Afghanistan should be supported. We urged the Afghan president to create conditions for reconciliation and peaceful negotiations, and ECO member-countries are prepared to exchange views on how we can supplement the efforts of the United Nations in this regard.

On Kashmir, I briefed the summit leaders on the situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir in my capacity as prime minister of Pakistan and the massive violation of human rights of the Kashmiri people by Indian occupation forces. In informed the leaders that we are ready to have meaningful talks on the basis of international law and for the settlement in accordance with UN resolutions.

On the ECO, the summit leaders expressed satisfaction at the concrete progress achieved during the landmark Islamabad summit. We discussed ways and means of consolidating progress that has been achieved and we all felt satisfied at the formation of the Eminent Persons Group which has been established by ECO. Now I would like to conclude by saying that Islamabad summit marked an important milestone in the history of ECO. It is a short history, but it is a history in which we have taken very substantive steps and we seem proud of our collective efforts to enhance ECO's role through concrete measures.

Now, I believe that the heads of the delegation and myself would like to take two or three questions from the members of the press and the foreign minister of Pakistan will conduct the press question.

[The station ended live coverage of the closing ceremony at 1405 GMT without covering the news conference mentioned by Benazir Bhutto.]

Summit Issues Communique

LD1503181095 Tehran IRNA in English 1553 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 15, IRNA—The 2-day summit of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) here issued "Islamabad declaration", indentifying four areas to intensify cooperation among its 10 members as their leaders agreed to further accelerate "economic and commercial collaboration".

The declaration was issued at the end of the 2-day third ECO summit here Wednesday.

The areas identified are, "development of infrastructural links transport and communications, trade and investment facilitation, energy, and ecology and protection of environment".

Stressing the need to mount regional efforts for forging "closer economic links and trade liberalization," it said the same should also be aimed to consolidate the economies of the member states.

The declaration affirmed the intrinsic linkage between peace and economic development and underlined that unbalanced economic growth and under-development were at the "heart of regional and international tensions".

The ECO leaders welcomed the concept of crisis management jointly presented by Pakistan and Turkmenistan as ECO's contribution to the promotion of regional and world peace.

While recognizing changing economic regional and international environment the declaration said that the "challenge for the ECO countries was to further liberalize their own trade and economic policies as well as to gain access to the markets of economically significant regions of the world."

Islamabad declaration said that regionally there was consensus on the free market approach while urging upon the member states to seize the opportunities presented by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

ECO countries, it said, would initiate concrete measures to enhance its role as an instrument of widening regional cooperation and improve the quality of life of 300 million people of its members.

The member states have expressed their satisfaction over the several agreements signed in the field of trade, air and sea transport, banking and reinsurance business, science and culture. It said these agreements would promote regional cooperation and strengthen ECO institutional framework.

The declaration expressed the confidence that peace and prosperity in the ECO region would help create greater solidarity and cooperation among the member countries.

Stressing the need for effective follow up action, the declaration said that the parties should implement the decision within the given framework. All the members agreed that requisite measures would be taken by member states in this regard. It reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen ECO in the spirit of the treaty of Izmir and the goals outlined in the "Quetta plan of action and the Istanbul declaration".

While recalling the decision taken at Quetta and Istanbul, it welcomed the decision to commemorate the decade of "transport and communications in the ECO region (1995-2004)."

The ECO had decided to establish a group of experts for recommending ways and means for the implementation of the outline plan which was adopted at Almaty to link ECO members with one another.

The declaration has welcomed the establishment of a group of eminent persons on enhancing the effectiveness of ECO.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli, Palestinian Delegates End Round of Talks

'Urayqat, Others Express 'Disappointment'

NC1403212995 Paris AFP in English 2026 GMT 14 Mar 95

[By Lee Keath]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 14 (AFP)—Palestinian negotiators expressed disappointment here Tuesday [14 March] after their first round of talks with Israel on self-rule elections since setting a July 1 target date for an agreement.

"We want to start a mutual formula to speed up these negotiations, for there is now a timeframe. But there was nothing new in the Israeli positions presented today," said the head of the Palestinian delegation Sa'ib 'Urayqat.

Tuesday's session was the first since PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres announced last Thursday that they would aim to reach an agreement on the second phase of self-rule by July 1.

"If this target date is not met then I'm afraid that come July we will not have an agreement to talk about," 'Urayqat said.

He added that there was no progress on resolving either the size or function of a Palestinian autonomy council to be created in elections.

"The Israeli position is undefined. There was no Israeli answer to many of the issues dealing with the legislative functions" of a Palestinian autonomy council, he said.

Palestinians are seeking a 100-member legislative council, while Israel has proposed a non-parliamentary body with only 20 to 30 members.

'Urayqat attributed the lack of progress to Israeli wavering on redeployment of its army from Palestinian population centers on the West Bank, already eight months behind schedule.

"The fact that the Israeli government has not made up its mind about redeployment is really evident and is affecting" negotiations, he said.

He implicitly questioned the usefulness of negotiations without a firm Israeli stance on redeployment.

"I believe the Israeli tactic will be to say there are negotiations going on and that they desire an agreement. But where will that lead us if there is no Israeli decision?" he added.

Under the 1993 Declaration of Principles on autonomy, Israel was to redeploy its troops on the West Bank ahead of elections in July 1994.

Autonomy was launched in Gaza and Jericho last May.

But Israel has held up the process because of security fears for Jewish settlers after a string of attacks by Moslem hardliners. It demands a crackdown by 'Arafat's self-rule authority.

'Urayqat stressed the urgency of the target date. "This should be a sacred date. Mr Rabin cannot go around as he has in the past saying no dates are sacred. One year of delay is enough," he said.

The chief Israeli negotiator Yoel Singer however said "lots of progress" was made Tuesday, the first of two days of talks in the Egyptian capital.

"The pace of negotiations is consistent with the target date. I am hopeful that we will meet the target date," he added.

Singer said earlier that Israel did not plan to exclude any party from the elections, when asked if the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) or other hardline groups would be allowed to take part.

"The word veto does not exist in our lexicon," he said. "We do not intend to exclude any party."

The two sides also disagree on whether the 160,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem can stand as candidates and on the make-up of an agreed-upon international observer team, 'Urayqat told AFP.

The two sides last met on February 22 in Cairo.

Talks End Without Tangible Progress

NC1503171795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA)—The 12th round of Palestinian-Israeli talks on legislative elections in the West Bank and Gaza concluded today without making any tangible progress.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government in the Palestinian National Authority and head of the Palestinian negotiating team, stated that the Palestinian side tried to begin a joint draft of the points included in the interim agreement but faced some procedural problems. He added: We discovered that 50 percent of the population records we received from the Israeli side included mistakes. The Palestinian side decided to let the Palestinian elections committee start an extensive campaign in all Palestinian territories to review the voter lists. Some 5,000 teachers have been assigned to carry out this revision, he added.

'Urayqat continued: We are talking about 1.2 million Palestinians who are 17 years and older to prepare the voter lists. The Israeli side, he added, submitted the names in Hebrew. 'Urayqat noted that the current round focused on the makeup of the Palestinian legislative council. For that purpose, the Palestinian delegation today handed the Israelis a paper on this subject, he said.

'Urayqat stressed that once the Israelis present a plan for redeployment it will speed up the elections, since the redeployment must go hand in hand with the elections. He pointed out that this time the two sides are working according to a timeframe to complete the negotiations for the interim period, which include the elections, redeployment, revision of laws, and the transfer of powers, by June.

Israel's Singer Says 'Big Progress' Made

TA1503171995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Another round of Israel-PLO talks on elections in the territories, with an emphasis on the autonomy council's structure, has ended in Cairo. Chief Israeli delegate Yo'el Singer told our Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus that big progress had been made at the talks. Many more things need to be discussed, he said, but he felt positive that the negotiations could be completed by the beginning of July—the deadline agreed on by Peres and 'Arafat.

Israeli Delegation Departs

NC1503183895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA)—The Israeli delegation to the talks with the Palestinians, led by Foreign Ministry legal adviser Yo'el Singer, left Cairo this evening after a two-day visit to Egypt. The Israeli delegation took part in the Palestinian-Israeli round of negotiations on the Palestinian elections.

'Urayqat Interviewed on Talks

JN1603129495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian-Israeli talks ended in Cairo yesterday. On the line now from Cairo is Dr. Sa'ib

'Urayqat [minister of local government in the Palestinian Authority and head of the Palestinian delegation to the Cairo talks].

[Announcer Yusuf al-Qazzaz] Dr. 'Urayqat how do you evaluate this Palestinian-Israeli round of talks?

['Urayqat] Good morning.

[Al-Qazzaz] Good morning to you Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat.

['Urayqat] This round of talks dealt with a new approach to the negotiations—13 months of negotiations. We have covered all issues that should be covered. Covering of issues does not mean agreement. Covering is one thing and agreement is quite another thing. There are six issues that must be listed in the interim agreement on elections. There will be no separate election agreement. The elections are an element of the four issues that constitutes the interim agreement, which includes the redeployment of Israeli forces outside populous areas in the West Bank in accordance with the Declaration of Principles [DOP] and the redeployment of Palestinian forces in their stead. Therefore there is no question of temporary deployment.

Secondly, there is the transfer of the remaining powers. The civil administration, which is exercising these powers, will be dissolved on the day after our council's formation. Therefore, the powers should be transferred to the Palestinian authorities before the elections. The military orders and laws will also be revised before the elections.

During this round, we tried to tackle what we had presented to the Israeli side, namely six working papers comparing the Israeli stands with the Palestinian stands on issues listed as Israeli concerns in the DOP. After all, the elections are Palestinian elections. Most of the issues that relate to the Palestinian election law are of domestic Palestinian concern.

An example of the issues that we have discussed is the agreed upon supervision. The Israeli side says that in case disputes or differences in views crop up, a Palestinian-Israeli committee should be formed. We say that what was agreed upon does not mean joint committee. If we want to form an arbitration body, let there be arbitrators from the EU, the United States, Egypt, Russia.

[Al-Qazzaz] Do you mean a joint committee for elections?

['Urayqat] No, a supervision committee; that is, in case of differences emerging. In case there are differences in views on the ground, what would happen? We say there should be a mechanism of arbitration. This cannot be a Palestinian-Israeli mechanism because the differences are Palestinian-Israeli differences in the first place. Therefore, we proposed an international committee for supervision composed of eight arbitrators from Egypt, the United States, EU, and Russia. This issue continues to be unresolved. I am just mentioning the nature of issues being discussed.

There is the international supervision of elections. We said that the elections will be completely open to international supervision. This means that the international standards will be adopted. We as Palestinian side will not interfere in these standards. We said that if Europe will not be responsible for arbitration, then let it be a coordinator of international supervision. Let there be invitations to the United Nations, the United States, Russia, Egypt, Jordan, Canada, Japan, and Norway, and the EU as coordinator.

One of the issues we talk about, one of the basic substantive issues, is the Jerusalem issue. The DOP stipulates the participation of Jerusalem residents in the elections. The principle of participation—to participate, [preceding phrase in English] as the DOP states—means running for membership, balloting, and fixing places for ballot boxes. As you know, for us and in accordance with our plans and election bylaws, Jerusalem is an independent constituency with eight seats in the legislative council. This is no secret. The issue remains unresolved. They say participate means vote and we wonder if in the history of democratic elections people have ever voted for persons who do not represent them, who are not from their own constituency. This, God willing, may be on its way to solution.

There is also the issue of numbers. They say this is an executive council consisting of 24 members. We responded by asking why hold elections then? This is unreasonable. We say the council will have legislative and executive powers. This is true democracy, a separate judicial system. [sentence as heard]

During the negotiations, many things related to Israeli statements concerning who will participate and who will not participate have been (?dropped). Israel had said that the council would have no legislative nature. There is now agreement on the legislative nature of the council.

[Al-Qazzaz] Therefore...

['Urayqat, interrupting] Let me say this, the question is not that of elections, the question is eventually related to an interim, four-point agreement. There will be no election agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinians. These issues, which we hope we will agree on, will be part of the interim agreement stipulating redeployment, the revision of laws, transportation, and the transfer of powers.

[Al-Qazzaz] Therefore, in one way or another, there has been progress in this round of talks?

['Urayqat] Let us not measure the delay. We are not ashamed of admitting progress. On the contrary, our aim is to make progress in the negotiations. But I tell you that President 'Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin agreed that redeployment negotiations should run in parallel with those for elections. Elections are only a part, as I said. We do not want the Israelis to say that the elections are an issue on its own. Elections can never be held without redeployment, as stipulated by the DOP. We tell the Israeli side: We are not here to negotiate on a new agreement. You have already signed an agreement and we now are searching for mechanisms to implement this agreement. We will not negotiate a new agreement regarding redeployment or other issues. The question is that these negotiations are taken as a whole. There are parts which should be negotiated upon.

On the election issue, there are unresolved problems. We presented extensive plans to the various Israeli delegations. We hope the Israeli side will realize that eventually either there is an agreement or there is no agreement. This is an incompletely born infant.

[Al-Qazzaz] Agreements are reached on implementation, is that right?

['Urayqat] We are not negotiating on a new agreement. We have an agreement signed in Washington. We are negotiating on finding mechanisms for implementing what has been agreed on. If the Israeli government says there is a temporary, cosmetic, or any sort of redeployment, that the redeployment does not include all the West Bank, we tell them look at the DoP, either there is an agreement or there is no agreement. In this round, we have said, and the Israeli delegation said, that there is a timeframe represented by next June. I believe that if we do not begin implementing the interim agreement by June, there will be no agreement. This is because the Gaza-Jericho part was not meant to be a field of experimentation and was not designed to stand on its feet in isolation from the remainder of the agreement. The Gaza-Jericho agreement should have become part of the interim agreement and of the remainder of the West Bank on 13 July 1994. More than eight months have passed. I believe that a year's delay is enough if this agreement is meant to succeed and to be given the chance. Therefore, June must be a sacred date. An agreement on redeployment must be reached as soon as possible.

[Al-Qazzaz] Thank you, Dr. 'Urayqat.

['Urayqat] Not at all.

U.S. Administration's Position on Peace Welcomed

MM1603103495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 95 p 15

[Article by Khayrallah Khayrallah: "U.S. Weakness...and the Strength of Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although it is not yet certain that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will achieve any breakthroughs in his current tour of the region, especially on the Syrian-Israeli track, it is certain that Christopher has so far scored important points in one direction, namely that the peace process has not faltered.

Proof of this is that Clinton's administration—despite its weakness—has managed to revive the Palestinian-Israeli track. One way or another this means that a collapse is unlikely to take place on this track—hence the Jordanian-Israeli track. And that Damascus must think carefully before concluding that waiting can be beneficial for it. It is clear that Yitzhaq Rabin's government knew that the situation in the region no longer tolerates delay. .And that, if there is a need to play this game, such practices can only adversely affect its domestic situation, and thus it must respond to the peace requirements as specified by Damascus. And these requirements are not impossible.

The important thing is that all parties are now convinced—ostensibly at least—that there is no alternative to the peace process. And that all those concerned with it must assess matters from the angle of the benefits that could be reaped from its continuation and the negative aspects that could result from its suspension.

True, the weakness of Clinton's administration has affected the peace process and prevented those concerned from taking decisions that should have been taken speedily and long ago. But it must be acknowledged in the end that this U.S. weakness leaves all those who entered the Madrid conference with one specific and limited option summed up in the following equation: If the aim is eventually to establish good relations with the United States, progress must be achieved at the peace level, if only for the reason that the Clinton administration considers the Middle east the only place in which it can achieve success at foreign policy level.

It is clear that peace in the Middle East can only begin with the Israeli-Palestinian peace and the link directly associated with it, namely the Jordanian-Israeli peace. It is no coincidence in this context for President Clinton to have chosen for the World Bank chairmanship a person who has over recent months expressed exceptional interest in developing the Palestinian self-rule area through the company headed by him, in addition to the insistence on helping Jordan. He is James Wolfensohn, who will take up his official ly assume his responsibilities in the summer. If there is a message behind the U.S. President's selection of Wolfensohn it is that paying attention to the self-rule area and Jordan is one of the priorities of U.S. foreign policy. And that moving closer to Washington can only be achieved by bolstering the peace process in the Middle East, specifically by bolstering what has been achieved between Israel and both the Palestinians and Jordan. It seems that Syria has gotten the message; hence it has so far refrained from putting any obstacles in the way of the Palestinians or Jordan, because it knows that anyone seeking to improve his relations with the United States must bolster the general U.S. orientation in the region.

The wager is now on Israeli steps that help Damascus make the difficult decisions, since the ball is still in the Israeli court. At the same time it is clear that the peace process is unavoidable, just as dealing with the United States—regardless of whether the administration in Washington is strong or weak—is unavoidable. So ultimately it all comes down to timing, now that developments since the Madrid conference have proved that George Bush and James Baker were right when they said that those who joined the conference were in fact entering a cage which they can only leave on one condition, namely a peace agreement with Israel that leads to opening Washington's doors.

Islamic Affairs

Brotherhood's Mashhur Urges Confrontation With 'Enemy'

NC1003135095 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 28 Feb 95 p 5

[Article by Mustafa Mashhur, deputy general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood: "Freedom, Elections, and Enemies"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Freedom is precious and vital for every man. With it, he proves himself and realizes his aspirations and through it, individuals, peoples, and nations take their course to dignity and power. Islam establishes every man's right to freedom within an accurate framework, rejects oppression, despotism, and injustice, fights serfdom, and encourages granting slaves their freedom.

Any regime that respects the will of the people and grants them their rightful freedom enjoys stability and a dignified life, wins people's confidence, and achieves full cooperation with all individuals to build and protect the state against calamities and aggression. In contrast, the ruling regimes that practice oppression and despotism against the people lose their subjects' confidence. Accordingly, the people do not back their regimes in fighting crises and checking aggression, stability is not established, and the people do not forbear injustice and oppression, instead working to gain their freedom. History shows that the will of the people prevails until freedom is gained.

Egypt lived long under the English occupation. Then it lived under military rule, during which so many freedom-restricting laws were issued that they became dominant. Military tribunals prevailed, particularly when it came to views. The system developed specialists in tailoring these exceptional laws. And how easy it is to pass these laws at the People's Assembly, which is almost void of opposition parties. We have the old emergency law with all its vices, the party law, the press law, the law on terrorism, Law No. 100 on trade unions and its amendments, the law on appointing mayors and university deans, and many others. This is not in the interest of the homeland or the citizens. It has affected public life and caused numerous crises; energies and talents were obstructed, the development of wealth was inconsistent with population increase, we failed to achieve self-sufficiency, prices increased and so did unemployment rates, crimes of robbery, pillage, drugs, and murders increased, voices were muffled, and the crushed youth were deprived of the necessities of life—food, clothing, housing, marriage, and so on. The confrontation emerged and the bloodletting started and continued without a glimpse of a solution. There were only unfulfilled promises. The lion's share of the burden was thrown at the Ministry of Interior to solve the problem with force and violence; these beget nothing but more violence. The jails are bursting with detainees. The people became apprehensive of the security forces, as if they are a source of panic rather than of reassurance and comfort.

All this is happening as we go through a year of elections. As they say, elections are the sound democratic approach to stability, security, and reform. If they are conducted freely and cleanly, elections produce the real representatives of the people and a government that satisfies the people and encourages them to cooperate with it to solve problems and address crises. Unfortunately, there is a commotion over whether the elections should be held according to individual or collective lists.

We truly regret what is happening in Algeria. When free and clean elections were held and the Islamists won their first round, army elements moved in, a coup was staged, the elections were canceled, and the confrontation and bloodshed started. It has claimed 30,000 lives so far. The last event occurred in a prison and killed over 100 people. The situation was further complicated. People searching for a solution for this crisis have agreed that the only solution is free elections in which the people choose their representatives and rulers.

We in Egypt are in dire need of swift and sound solutions for our problems through abrogating exceptional laws and holding elections in the various trade unions and legislative councils in a free and clean climate. The government should not swim against the tide and hence fail to achieve stability, security, and safety, particularly since we are up against an enemy that planted itself through terrorism and violence and is now keeping up its march by deception and trickery. That enemy has been showing its fangs lately.

The Muslim Brotherhood has repeatedly cautioned against the threat of that enemy and its malice. We drew the lessons from the Almighty's book, from the history of Islam and Muslims, and from the Palestinians the gangs killed and displaced. Our position did not appeal to politicians. We have suffered greatly since 1948.

We fought in 1948 and our fighting was aborted, we opposed the Camp David Accords and nobody responded to us, and we opposed the Oslo agreement and were told that we were opposed to peace. We are still being subjected to violence because of that. Yasir 'Arafat visited us and we explained to him our vision. We cautioned him against Palestinian infighting and told him: This enemy does not mean the same peace you understand. The enemy deceives, procrastinates, and seriously works to Judaize all Palestine, particularly Jerusalem.

That enemy is now showing its true intentions, revealing that it is preparing for war and that it will not sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It is attacking the Egyptian foreign minister for saying that Egypt will not sign the Treaty unless Israel does.

We fully appreciate the sound Egyptian national position on this issue and strongly condemn the Zionist intransigence. Peres came to see President Husni Mubarak, hoping to reach a compromise involving procrastination and deception. We caution officials in our dear Egypt against responding to the enemy's request to postpone their signing of the agreement until a comprehensive peace is achieved in the region. What they call peace is no peace and it will not be achieved, because they are deceptive tricksters. The map of greater Israel still hangs in the Knesset. It is even being said that America is contemplating the transfer of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which their officials consider the eternal capital of their state.

Now that the enemy has shown its intentions, our government should review its policy toward its people, get ready, and prepare these people to confront the enemy instead of living the lie of peace with it.

To find real popular backing against the enemy, the government should guarantee freedoms, conduct free and clean elections, and banish the crisis of confidence with the immortal Egyptian people, who have a glorious record in confronting enemies. God knows our love and loyalty to the homeland prompt us to give this advice. We hope officials will show responsiveness before it is too late. Things happen fast, time does not wait, and we have turned our backs on that advice for too long, over half a century. [passage omitted]

On Proliferation of Islam

NC1203112895 Cairo AL-NUR in Arabic 8 Mar 95 p 4

[Interview with Mustafa Mashhur, deputy general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, by Rajab al-Damanhuri; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Damanhuri] Is not the proliferation of Islamic groups a sign of divisions and a dispersion of the Islamic nation?

[Mashhur] The proliferation of Islamic groups does not pose a threat except to the extent that some groups depart from sound Islamic policy and proper behavior. Islamic groups which correctly understand and apply Islam are a force for unity and solidarity and are opposed to divisions and conflicts. If there are too many groups and some of them have distorted ideas, then those who are to blame for this situation are the people who have resisted and continue to resist the implementation of God's shari'ah and who wish to prevent preachers from disseminating sound Islamic concepts.

[Al-Damanhuri] According to some circles, you claim to represent the totality of Muslims and regard those who leave your group as being beyond the pale of the Muslim community? What do you say?

[Mashhur] This interpretation contradicts the facts. The Muslim Brothers have not claimed that they represent the entire Muslim community and have never placed any Muslim beyond the pale or accused him of disbelief. In their writings, they have always opposed distorted ideas. Hasan al-Hudaybi, a former Muslim Brotherhood general guide, published his book Du'at la Qudat [Preachers, Not Judges] to illustrate and affirm the Brotherhood's status and mission. I believe that the Muslim Brothers' actions and the facts prove that this accusation is false.

[Al-Damanhuri] Some say that the Brotherhood's chief aim is to seize power rather than make Islam govern every aspect of our life.

[Mashhur] The Muslim Brotherhood has frequently declared that it does not seek power, nor is power its aim or objective. The Muslim Brothers seek to propagate the divine call. They have no worldly ambitions. Their only ambition is God's pleasure which is more enduring. Former general guide 'Umar al-Talmasani, may he rest in peace, said that the Muslim Brothers are willing to work in any capacity, even as street cleaners as long as the ruler implements God's shari'ah. This means they are willing to place themselves at the service of any ruler who governs according to God's laws.

[Al-Damanhuri] Some people claim that the mere establishment of an Islamic group within a Muslim state constitutes a challenge to the ruler. What do you think of this claim?

[Mashhur] The Muslim Brothers have not challenged the rulers, nor have they borne arms to topple or depose a ruler. There is a big difference between giving advice, a task which the Muslim Brothers consider a duty to perform, and challenging the ruler. In doing this the Muslim Brothers are guided by God's shari'ah and the teachings of his prophet, May God's prayers and peace be with him. The Muslim Brothers' record proves this. Their attitude to revolutions and coups d'etat is well-known. Their writings show that they follow the method of educating the public in righteousness, teaching them moral values and ethics, and promoting security and stability. When a group of people takes it upon itself to propagate the divine call peacefully, this is a sound Islamic practice.

[Al-Damanhuri] Certain people accuse the Muslim Brothers of inciting terrorism and sectarian sedition and of provoking disturbances in the professional associations. What is your view?

[Mushhur] It is the Muslim Brothers who are being assailed, defamed, accused, and harmed. Everyone knows that they fought all forms of colonization and they have a history of struggle in Palestine. The blood of the Muslim Brothers drenched the land of Palestine and, despite this, they are accused of being agents of colonialism and Zionism and of committing acts of terrorism. It is the Muslim Brothers who were killed and tortured and hanged—such as the venerable scholar shaykh Muhammad Farghali, Sayyid Qutb, the well known author of al-Zilal; and 'Abd-al-Qadir 'Awdah, a judge of integrity and author of a book entitled Criminal Legislation in Islam. The Muslim Brothers are accused of inciting rebellion against the rulers and of seeking to seize power. The Muslim Brothers who came forward to take part in public action and won the confidence of the educated and specialists in the professional associations and in free and honest elections under the supervision of the judiciary are accused of sneaking from behind the scenes. The Muslim Brothers have been and still are the most concerned about national unity. They contributed in word and deed to confronting sectarian sedition more than once. They were even requested to do that out of faith in their ability to address such situations and in their keenness on national unity. Despite this, they are accused of inciting sedition. The Muslim Brothers endorse the principle of amicable counselling for the sake of God, his prophet, and all Muslims and their approach advocates good and kind preaching. Despite this they are exposed to defamation, distortion and are accused of terrorism. However, the people are now aware enough to tell good from bad.

[Al-Damanhuri] Despite your repeated condemnation of violence, the previous existence of the Muslim Brotherhood's special statute raises many questions. What do you think?

[Mashhur] The Muslim Brothers stayed in jail from 1954 to 1974. They were released in the mid 1970's and began to operate within the confines allowed by the law. Despite all restrictions and harassments, there have been no evidence or witnesses that the Muslim Brothers committed any act of violence or terrorism. Facts say that the Muslim Brothers were exposed to killing, torture, and displacement by the hundreds and thousands. No Muslim Brother has ever been engaged in a single act of violence or terrorism. As for the special statute, it was intended to educate the youths in their struggle to confront colonialism and Zionist aggression against Palestine and to set splendid examples of struggle and martyrdom in the Suez Canal battles and Palestine and in other areas. When the colonialists left, there was no longer any role for the special statute.

[Al-Damanhuri] Security sources say that there is a relationship between the Muslim Brothers and the Islamic groups. Is there any truth to this accusation?

[Mashhur] If there is a relationship, as certain parties claim, which is false, why do they not provide one piece of evidence to prove it. The Muslim Brothers have well known stances on extremism and terrorism and the book Preacher Not Judges gives full answers to various ideological controversies that led to extremism. These answers led many people to return to the right path. The Muslim Brothers condemn terrorism and they raised generations in preaching based on objective argument and good and kind counselling.

[Al-Damanhuri] Some people claim that your demand that an Islamic state be set up suggests that the current state is not Islamic. What is your opinion on this matter?

[Mashhur] We are a group of Muslims whose duty is not to issue verdicts and judge the infidels. Our duty is to preach good work and good-will. We do not label this state, or any other, as an infidel, but demand that all governments implement God's law, praised be his name. The Muslim Brothers have not appointed themselves judges to condemn and issue judgments. They are a group that calls on people to unite over justice, love, cordiality, and sacrifice.

[Al-Damanhuri] Is the Islamic state, in your views, a religious state similar to the governments the West had during the Middle Ages?

[Mashhur] The Islamic state applies God's shari'ah and fulfills the trust in full. It provides security, spreads freedom, protects rights, wards off aggression, preserves resources, develops funds, and invests them for the generations of today and the future. It also spreads light and good-will everywhere. It is a civil government that rules within the framework of God's laws; it is not a religious government entrusted with heavenly appointment, as you suggested in your question. [passage omitted]

[Al-Damanhuri] You are demanding the establishment of the Islamic state, yet you do not have any programs or practical views on reform from the Islamic perspective in your response.

[Mashhur] The existence or absence of programs is a poor and invalid excuse. Islam has economic views peculiar to it; it has special stands regarding private ownership, public funds, riches, development of resources, preserving these resources for the generations of today and tomorrow, and interest-free banks. However, the allegations by the begrudging group of people try to bury these facts and cover the mature aspects of Islamic thinking and trends. A few years ago, shari'ah was categorized as draft laws. Many programs were set for many issues. However, they are shelved in the People's Assembly. All these programs clarify the correct views of the Islamic current. Nevertheless, there is one question: What did people gain from Marxism? What are they harvesting from the fruits of capitalism other than loss, backwardness, and occupation? [passage omitted]

[Al-Damanhuri] The Muslim Brothers allied with non-Islamic currents to realize some electoral or other gains, despite the fact that the ends do not justify the means. What is your explanation for this?

[Mashhur] We do not believe that the Brothers' alliance with one or the other currents in the Egyptian arena constitutes a violation or excess, particularly since we see that a siege is imposed on Islamic action. The means before us are absent and the ways are hampered. Our policy does not rest on the means justifying the ends. With the Brothers, the end comes before the means and should be above suspicion. The Brothers allied with the Wafd Party during the People's Assembly elections of 1984. They also allied, and are still allied, with the Labor Party. The Labor Party announced that it will proceed with its role along the Islamic program. The Wafd Party did not declare that it is hostile to, or that it fights Islam.

[Al-Damanhuri] In some countries, the Islamic group has coexisted with regimes that have adopted sectarian views. They have had a truce with them. What is your reaction to this?

[Mashhur] The issue is not one of war, clashes, or confrontation. Circumstances, atmospheres, conditions, and concepts all require that the nation unites to overcome this stage without confrontations or clashes, which no one can benefit from, except for the enemy who lurks in waiting for such occasions. The duty of the Brothers is not to confront the regimes and declare war against them, but to offer advice and reveal the good and evil sides and where the positive and negative aspects lie. Our duty is to extend bridges of understanding with respect to what benefits the public good.

We hope God the almighty will unite the scattered nation round a pivot that is based on belief and that urges the nation to work, sacrifice, and show values of love, clarity, and giving.

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 7 Mar

NC1003174895

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 7 March edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Angry Reactions to NATO Chief's Anti-Islam Remarks
2. Islamic Thinker Views Muslims' Problem With The West
3. Link Between Violence and Political Islam Rejected
4. War Against Chechnya Seen as Part of Conspiracy Against Islam
5. Zhirinovskiy's Call for Muslim-Orthodox Alliance Rejected

ANGRY REACTIONS TO NATO CHIEF'S ANTI-ISLAM REMARKS

In a 1,500-word report on page 3, Tariq 'Abdallah cites some "sharp" reactions by Egyptian Muslim figures to a statement by NATO Secretary General Willy Claes in which he reportedly said that Islam has become the West's primary enemy after the collapse of communism. Egypt's mufti Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi is cited as saying that Islam does not antagonize other religions, and that it "extends its hand for a just peace and calls for security and reassurance." Tantawi offers a verse from the Koran to support his argument and to prove that Claes' claim "is untrue."

Islamic thinker Fahmi Huwaydi maintains that NATO "is looking for a job after the collapse of communism, and it seems it found it in 'Islamic fundamentalism'." Huwaydi reportedly says that Claes' statement represents "an official proclamation of Islam as the enemy of the West." He suggests this supports a call made by Israel immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union four years ago.

For Islamic thinker Muhammad 'Amarah, the NATO secretary's statement is "a new call for attacking Islam under the pretext of combating extremism and terrorism, and part of a continuing series of Western attacks against Islam and Muslims." 'Amarah argues that Muslims have no problem with Western peoples or sciences, but with "the Western project, which negates the Islamic cultural project and seeks to impose the hegemony of the arrogant Western power on the entire world, especially the Muslim world."

Islamic preacher Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Shahin says Claes' statement is nothing new. He notes that similar claims were made in the first Western meeting after the fall of communism. He says reaction to such statements should come only from Islamic organizations and establishments. He regrets that the Islamic world is divided, dependent on the West, and lacking in will.

ISLAMIC THINKER VIEWS MUSLIMS' PROBLEM WITH THE WEST

An unattributed 500-word report on page 2 cites Islamic thinker Ahmad Kamal Abu-al-Majd telling a seminar on "Islam and the Challenges of the Age" that the West "largely overestimates fundamentalism." Abu-al-Majd mentions three Arab "fears" regarding the West: The West's policy of "double standards," the West's support for Israel, and the West's "insistence" on enmity toward the Arabs. On the third point, he says that statements made by many Western leaders demonstrate their enmity toward Arabs and Muslims. He says the West supports Israel without limits at the expense of the Arabs. He is cited as saying: "I am happy with the current crisis [between Egypt and Israel] because it made a good impact: It alerted the inattentive people, woke the sleeping, and guided those under illusions." On democracy and freedom, Abu-al-Majd reportedly says that the way these are practiced in many Arab and Islamic countries is "unsatisfactory by any standard, especially by the Islamic standard."

LINK BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL ISLAM REJECTED

In approximately 2,000 words on page 6, Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim al-Fayyumi writes part one of an article on Islam vis-a-vis Western cultural and ideological concepts. He touches on the concept of "political Islam," saying that the term is being used "unscientifically, inaccurately, and in a manner that shows foolish shallowness." He says that linking the terrorism and extremism that emerged from some groups and trends with political Islam or fundamentalism entails falsehood and injustice to Islam. He argues that extremism and terrorism are social phenomena linked with social circumstances, and may find their reasons in history, coercion, or domination. "When we attribute this to Islam, we miss the fact and misinterpret Islam," he says, adding: "Islam is not a phenomenon, and is not subject to historical circumstances that affirm it or cancel it out." He argues that "at times of disturbance and persecution and in extraordinary times of history, humanity searches for a shelter in the form of secret groups, which can be religious or otherwise."

WAR AGAINST CHECHNYA SEEN AS PART OF CONSPIRACY AGAINST ISLAM

Page 21 contains an 800-word report by Musa Hal on a seminar held at al-Azhar University to discuss the problem in Chechnya. The correspondent cites speakers arguing that the war against the Chechens is part of an "international conspiracy" against Islam in Europe. One speaker is cited saying the war in Chechnya will protract and the West "will encourage it and then use it to distort the image of Islam and accuse it of terrorism."

ZHIRINOVSKIY'S CALL FOR MUSLIM-ORTHODOX ALLIANCE REJECTED

In a 350-word article on page 21, columnist 'Adil Dayf rejects a call by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Russian Liberal Democratic Party, to form an anti-West alliance between Muslims and Orthodox Russians. Justifying this rejection, Dayf notes that Russia practiced "the most horrible forms of aggression" against Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Afghanistan. Moreover, Dayf maintains, Islam is no one's enemy, not in the East or West. "Muslims are always extending their hand to anyone who wants to live in peace with them," he asserts. He says Muslims and people of all other religions must join forces to establish peace in the world.

Palestinian Affairs

Sha'th: Fatah Central Committee Meeting 'Positive'

JN1603093095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Fatah Central Committee, chaired by President Yasir 'Arafat, will continue its meetings in Tunis today. The Fatah Central Committee meeting last night continued until 0300 today. It discussed the latest developments of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, the means of bolstering national Palestinian unity, the economic situation in the occupied West Bank and the Palestinian National Authority areas. Colleague Fathi al-Barqawi interviewed Dr. Nabil Sha'th on this subject:

[Begin recording] [al-Barqawi] Dr. Sha'th, could you tell us about the topics discussed at the Fatah Central Committee meeting last night?

[Sha'th] In fact, the meeting was fruitful and positive in every respect. All Central Committee members were present and the meeting began by submitting a simple agenda of three topics. The first was on the political aspects and the political developments in the peace process. The second dealt with the way the Palestinian Authority can build the institutions in the territories and deal with citizens' daily concerns, headed by the economic problem. The third dealt with organizational affairs concerning Fatah and its role inside and outside the territories.

[Al-Barqawi] Apparently there were differences over the first topic.

[Sha'th] Actually, there were discussions in today's meeting, but concentration was on the need to provide full information from the brothers in the homeland on developments so these can be discussed tomorrow by those inside and outside the territories. Consequently, today President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] spoke for more than an hour and a half; he explained all political developments since our entry into the Palestinian arena and our return to our homeland, Palestine. He was followed by other brothers. Brother Faysal al-Husayni spoke about the issue of Jerusalem. Sister Umm-Jihad [Intisar al-Wazir] spoke about social affairs and prisoners and families of martyrs. Brother al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim spoke about intra-Palestinian political relations and the general political situation, including relations with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Islamic Jihad Movement, the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine, and others. Brother Zakariya al-Agha spoke about housing issues and problems related to public services. Brother Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] spoke about the implementation of the economic agreement and about aid. Then I spoke about the political situation in general and the negotiations in detail, as well as the new economic plan and the basic construction plan called the master plan [preceding two words in English] and aid, too. Thus, the conferees presented to their brothers who remained outside the homeland the details of the political and economic situation and public services and the problems facing the Palestinian-Israeli, Palestinian-Arab, Palestinian-international, and intra-Palestinian relations.

[Al-Barqawi] Thank you, Dr. Sha'th. [end recording]

The Fatah Central Committee meetings will continue until tomorrow evening. President 'Arafat will then preside over a PLO Executive Committee meeting.

Qaddumi Calls For Halting Peace Talks

TA1503155795 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 13 Mar 95 pp 1, 15

[Interview with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-MANAR] Will the representatives of the factions that oppose or have reservations about the Oslo accord attend the leadership meeting in Tunis?

[Qaddumi] I have talked with these factions; they said: If the topic of discussion is the Oslo accord, we will not participate. If, however, the PLO Executive Committee meeting is devoted to a comprehensive assessment, we will attend.

[AL-MANAR] What will you demand at the upcoming Executive Committee meeting?

[Qaddumi] I and some of my colleagues will demand a halt to the talks.

[AL-MANAR] For what reasons?

[Qaddumi] Because Israel does not seek a just and genuine peace.

[AL-MANAR] If the Executive Committee's decisions are adopted by a majority, are those decisions binding on the National Authority [NA]?

[Qaddumi] Yes, they are.

[AL-MANAR] How do you view the current situation of the political process?

[Qaddumi] In the wake of the failed talks, which have gone on for a long time, there is a conviction now that a reassessment of the past and present situation of the process is necessary. We must admit that the Palestinian leadership is presently at an impasse, and it must extricate itself from it.

[AL-MANAR] Why do you not give a chance to the talks on implementing the Oslo accord?

[Qaddumi] We will not be a cover for these talks which have not achieved anything and which will not achieve anything.

[AL-MANAR] Will the Fatah Central Committee hold its meetings soon?

[Qaddumi] The Central Committee meetings will be stretched out over two days, after which the PLO Executive Committee will meet. The Central Committee is meeting so that we can receive our instructions from Fatah. This committee's decisions are also binding.

[AL-MANAR] How can one emerge from the impasse to which you referred?

[Qaddumi] Many factors must be taken into consideration. It is necessary to reassess the talks and hold contacts with the two cosponsors of the peace conference in order to urge them to activate their roles. We should have worked out the agreements with Israel before the Jordanian-Israeli agreement was signed. We must enhance our relations with Jordan.

[AL-MANAR] Is there a flaw in the economic practices within the NA?

[Qaddumi] There is a deep flaw in the economic practices. When the donor states asked us to set up a Palestinian institution to supervise the aid, we established the Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, which I head. This council was welcomed by the donor states. Regrettably, however, a certain mental attitude has prevented this council from carrying out its task. We tried to fix the flaw, but the council suspended its work inside the NA, and its meetings have become infrequent.

We need organized minds and expertise. We should refrain from interfering in each other's duties and from adopting individual decisions, which unfortunately is the case now in the Palestinian arena. It is necessary to clear the air of middlemen, commission agents, and secret deals. I have proof of this bad situation.

[AL-MANAR] What exactly will you discuss at your upcoming meetings?

[Qaddumi] We will discuss everything out of our concern for the national cause which is threatened. This cause cannot remain without a solution. The solution is through the institution.

[AL-MANAR] Why are you not returning to Gaza to ease the burden on your colleagues?

[Qaddumi] There is no freedom of movement inside. Those who assumed responsibility to undertake this task in this transitional stage, which is regarded as a test of Israeli intentions, should carry out the reconstruction. We, who have reservations about this accord, gave a chance to others so that we might prove to everyone that the Oslo experience will be destroyed by Israel and that it will not implement the accord. In addition, there is poor administration on the Palestinian side.

[AL-MANAR] Will you call on President 'Arafat to return to Tunis in protest of the Israeli stance which is impeding the peace process?

[Qaddumi] It is not easy for 'Arafat to return. He carries a heavy burden.

We must restore Arab coordination which was undermined by the Oslo accord, prepare the people by placing the facts before them, and insist on a good performance by the NA. The current performance is bad.

[AL-MANAR] About two weeks ago the Executive Committee held a meeting in Cairo in which you did not participate. What were the reasons?

[Qaddumi] No preparations were made for this meeting, and it lacked a quorum.

[AL-MANAR] You visited Baghdad recently. What were the reasons for the visit?

[Qaddumi] As head of Palestinian diplomacy, I took the initiative to explain the developments of the situation without asking Baghdad to adopt a stance. As it is, Baghdad's plight is difficult.

[AL-MANAR] How do you view Palestinian-Syrian relations? And do you think there is a flaw in these relations which requires Palestinian steps to restore the relations to their normal status?

[Qaddumi] Syria's relations with the PLO are good, but the NA does not maintain relations with Syria. The strain in relations stems from the Oslo accord.

[AL-MANAR] What about relations with Jordan?

[Qaddumi] On our part, first of all we must implement the agreements signed with Jordan.

UK's Major: East Jerusalem 'Part of Occupied Territories'

JN1503151395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] British Prime Minister John Major has said that his government considers east Jerusalem part of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Following his meeting with President Yasir 'Arafat at the presidential headquarters in Gaza, Major promised to extend $120 million to the Palestinian National Authority.

The British prime minister's wife rejected the Israeli offer to provide guards during her visit to Bethlehem and al-Duhayshah camp, saying that she felt safe in the Palestinian territories.

Algeria

FIS Armed Group Appoints New Temporary Leader

LD1503134695 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS], the armed branch of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], has announced the appointment of a temporary national amir to stand in in the absence of the main leaders of the movements. This decision, which still has to be authenticated, is announced in an AIS communique quoted today by the Arab daily AL-HAYAH, which is distributed in several Arab and western capitals.

Paper Cites GIA, Islamic Salvation Army Statements

MM1503162695 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Algeria: Salvation Front's Military Are in Control of its Leadership"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—In a statement, a copy of which AL-HAYAH has received, the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] warned yesterday of "suspect elements" operating in its name in Europe. It said for the first time that the AL-ANSAR bulletin is not "organically" linked to it, nor does it officially speak in its name. This means that the GIA is dissociating itself from positions emanating through this bulletin and "repudiating" numerous Islamic groups not sharing its hard-line views. The GIA's statement, of which AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy, named some people who it said are active in Europe and "claiming" to be speaking in its name. AL-HAYAH could not contact the people in question to obtain their reaction to what is mentioned in the GIA's statement, which was issued by "members of the Europe Bureau" of the GIA's "External Activities Committee."

The Islamic Salvation Army said in a statement, a copy of which AL-HAYAH has received, that it has appointed a "national amir [leader] on behalf of our noble leaders." This is a striking position of considerable importance, because it officially means that the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] leadership is now practically in the hands of the field command. As is known, the Salvation Army, the FIS' military arm, is operating in the eastern and western regions under two amirs. Several groups operating in the central region say that they are operating under the name "Battalions of the Islamic Salvation Army." But these groups do not take orders from one amir, and their links with the amirs of the eastern and western regions are not clearly defined.

The Salvation Army's statement, which bears the signature of the "National Shura Council," said that "in loyalty to the FIS' historic and legitimate leadership representing the Algerian people as a whole, which is still behind the tyrants' bars; and proceeding from the need to unite the nation and close its ranks; now that the scope of the jihad has expanded; and in the light of field developments on the jihad scene—the National Shura Council of the Islamic Salvation Army met after extensive consultations, unanimously agreeing on the need to appoint a national amir on behalf of our noble leaders. They agreed unanimously on brother Madani Merzak. Thus the Islamic Salvation Army urges the struggling Algerian people to have confidence in and be assured about the decision taken by the National Shura Council. And to respond to any position or decision this leadership takes."

This is the first time the Salvation Army has appointed a leadership "on behalf" of the detained leaders. Algerian authorities recently moved Shaykhs Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj from their residence in Djenan El Mufti to an unknown destination.

Regarding the GIA's statement, of which AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy, it said that "suspect elements from among mentally ill people, opportunists, and disturbed people" are operating in Europe, "falsely claiming affiliation to the GIA. Some of them issue statements, attributing them to the GIA. Some have made statements to some media services claiming they represent the GIA. Others are roaming Europe, telling preachers that they are officially authorized by the GIA." The statement noted that some of these people "repudiate Muslims and claim affiliation to the GIA. This is what the GIA detected in an Islamic association in Stockholm, Sweden."

The statement added that, "although the GIA has not broached this matter in the past, this is attributable to reasons and considerations that fall under the GIA's external action strategy and the policy pursued at this stage." The statement added that the ideas advocated by those claiming affiliation to the GIA "are causing alarm, distorting the GIA's image, and causing Muslims to refrain from supporting the jihad and sympathizing with the GIA."

The GIA named a person called Ahmad Belkasem, who spoke to a German magazine. It stressed that it has nothing to do with him, and that his positions do not represent its official view. It also cited "Abu Fatimah El Tunsi, who is active in an Islamic association in Stockholm, Sweden." It said that "he has nothing to do with the GIA. And the GIA dissociates itself from the ideas he is promoting." It added that he belongs to the "Repudiation and Renunciation Group." It also cited Abu Dawud El Maghrebi (from Sweden), saying that he is operating in Europe, "claiming affiliation to the GIA." The GIA statement pointed out that "the AL-ANSAR bulletin is not organically linked to the GIA, hence it is not the GIA's official mouthpiece. Thus what is written in it does not necessarily reflect the GIA's thinking, policy, or views as regards some of the current issues. It reflects the ideas and views of those writing in it."

Finally the GIA pointed out that there are elements operating in "Britain, France, Belgium, Denmark, and

Sweden." And it called for "caution and for taking precautions vis-a-vis the elements' actions."

This is the first time the GIA has dissociated itself from these elements and from the bulletins published in Europe. More than one source say that some of these groups and bulletins are infiltrated by Algerian security services. FIS supporters in particular agree with this view. They say that there are two Islamic groups: The first is genuine and to some extent close to the positions of the FIS (from which it broke away as a result of the incidents that followed the cancellation of the elections in 1992), and the second is infiltrated by Algerian intelligence services, hence it does not reflect the GIA's views inside the country. In fact it is working to distribute statements designed to "cause confusion and split mujahidin ranks."

AL-ANSAR used to be very close to the GIA, since all the statements issued by the GIA and its leaders used to be published in it. But some of the positions declared in the bulletin have on several occasions provoked widespread controversy at the [Islamic] jurisprudence level. Because most Islamic movements, including those described as hard-liners, used to dissociate themselves from what was published in the bulletin, considering it a violation of the true teachings of Islam. As is known, this bulletin (AL-ANSAR) used to claim responsibility for the murder of Muslims and Christians and also for robbery and bombing operations, which the FIS hastened to condemn.

Some sources have said that the GIA's new statement points to "differences and misunderstandings" among its supporters abroad, specifically in Europe. They also noted that several groups in Europe are "competing" over speaking in the GIA's name. The sources said that "ways of disposing of the money collected in Europe are also a source of disagreement" among GIA supporters.

Former FIS Official Urges FIS To Mediate

LD1503205895 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ahmed Merani one of the former personalities [consultative council member] of the dissolved FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] held a news conference at Algiers Hotel this afternoon. He talked for 90 minutes and tackled the situation in the country and presented a number of proposals which he considered appropriate to put an end to the bloodshed the Algerian people have been suffering from for three years. Ahmed Merani called on members of the FIS consultative council to end their silence so as to stop bloodshed.

[Begin Mirani recording] I tell the founders [of FIS] who have carried this trust: Mediate, put out the fire, then dissolve yourselves and go home, and those who wish to establish another party let them do so and those who wish to put themselves up for elections let them do so. But let your sole effort be toward saving the blood of the Algerians. Be men and record your stance in history or else history will testify against you and you will be responsible before God and history because he who does not speak up for right is a mute devil [as heard]. [passage omitted]

While you men are sleeping in your houses. Rise up and die if your rising would mean you die so that Algeria, the people, Islam live, then rise up and die. I call on the founders of FIS to rise up, to end their silence, mediate, ask to be received by the officials, and try to put out this fire. [passage omitted]

For the first time in the history of humanity, a people has been transformed into a hostage for political ends. This is the first time ever that struggles between apparatuses and between factions, i.e. the army ...[pauses]...This is the first time that struggles for political positions, for a political plot, and for otherwise have transformed a people into a hostage. [last sentence in French] The people has been transformed into a hostage for political ends. Young girls of 17 and 15 years old have been slaughtered with the encouragement of several parties for political positions and political ends, and to bring pressure to bear upon the authorities as if the 15-year old girl was to blame for bringing [President] Zeroual to power. The girl cannot be blamed. And what have these done to be taken as hostages by the political strife? The girl is not to blame and the people are not to blame. [passage omitted]

As far as the [presidential] elections are concerned, one should not look at them as a mere proposition; rather one should think that they are a must. For it is inconceivable that a group of people can lead the Algerian people without having been elected by it first. It is paramount, therefore, that we should agree that the people should be able to choose its representatives. [end recording].

Immigrants in Quebec Protest Against U.S. Policy

LD1503164995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Berber 1200 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to APS [Algerian Press Agency], hundreds of Algerians living in Canada demonstrated outside the U.S. Embassy in Montreal to protest against the U.S. backing of Islamists and Anouar Haddam [leader of Islamic Salvation Front, FIS, parliamentary delegation abroad].

Quebecois citizens and an association of Iranian women also took part in the demonstration.

Egypt

Official Visits to Israel Reportedly Stopped

NC1503143895 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 11 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Salim 'Abd-al-Ghani]

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab diplomatic sources have affirmed that Egypt has made a decision to stop official visits to Israel. These sources said that Egypt made this decision in response to Israel's stance on refusing to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The sources also noted that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has failed to settle the nuclear crisis between Egypt and Israel.

These sources also said that the Palestinian Authority rejected an Israeli request to transfer the venue of the negotiations on implementing the self-government from Cairo to any other capital. These sources said that transferring the venue of the negotiations is one of the clauses of the document that Israel had prepared to punish Egypt. This document was leaked to the Israeli paper HA'ARETZ by the Israeli Foreign Ministry. This document threatens that Israel may intercede with the United States to cut its aid to Egypt in response to what Israel considers Egypt's negative policy. Other punishments outlined in the document include placing the issue of the Nile waters in the multiparty negotiations between the Arabs and Israel. Israel also accuses Egypt of participating in the Pakistani nuclear program. Israeli press sources claim that Egyptian scientists are participating and working in the Pakistani nuclear program.

Bullet Hits Israeli Diplomat's Car 'by Mistake'

NC1503213095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA)—While a conscript from the al-Ma'adi security force was fiddling with his weapon, a bullet was fired by mistake, piercing the right rear door of the car of the Israeli minister plenipotentiary in Cairo. The Israeli diplomat was not in the car during the incident. At the time the conscript was guarding the residence of the Israeli diplomat.

Christopher's Tour Said Showing No 'Breakthroughs'

NC1503155595 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 9

[Editorial: "The Indications of Christopher's Tour"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Actual developments resulting from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region lead one to believe that no major "breakthroughs" can be expected. From the beginning, there was a conviction that the tour of the American secretary comes as the peace process is in an extremely complicated situation, especially on the Syrian and Palestinian negotiating tracks, and also as far as Israel's nuclear armaments is concerned.

But the difficulty in achieving tangible results during the U.S. secretary's current tour proceeds from the fact that the objectives of the tour are modest. The United States stressed that it is not prepared to pressure Israel on any disputed issue between the Arabs and Israel. Moreover, the U.S. Administration failed to show any significant interest in offering any ideas or proposals to bring the views of the two sides closer.

Concerning Israel's nuclear armaments, Christopher was content to only express his understanding of the Egyptian position. He reaffirmed his position that a discussion of Israel's nuclear armaments should be postponed until the situation of the peace process has become clear.

As regards the settlement process, Christopher appeared to fully adopt Israel's position toward the Palestinians, calling for a halt to the acts of violence directed against the Israeli occupation, and even rejecting a discussion of elections and redeployment of the Israeli forces, which are among the most complicated issues on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track.

Concerning the Syrian-Israeli track, Christopher's role seems to be limited to conveying Israeli proposals to the Syrian side to resume bilateral talks. This does not hold promise of major developments on this track. Moreover, it does not seem that these Israeli proposals will this time be much different from previous ones, which suggested partial Israeli withdrawal from the Golan over three years. Syria has always rejected such proposals.

Consequently, the entire peace process is now in a more difficult situation, and indications are that this difficulty is apt to increase in the near future, especially as the Americans and the Israelis will be busy with local election campaigns in their countries.

Mufti on U.S. Visit, 'Terrorism,' Religion

MM1403165695 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 5

[Interview with Grand Mufti Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Some people have interpreted your recent visit to the United States as an affirmation of your championing the current that supports the normalization of relations with Israel and that the visit had purely political objectives and nothing to do with the Islamic Call [preaching for Islam]. What do you say to that?

[Tantawi] The essence of the Islamic Call in my opinion is to confront words with words and arguments with arguments and proofs with proofs. If other people make efforts to persuade others to adopt their belief, then it is our duty as Muslims to make similar efforts within the framework of our field of specialization to explain to the world the bright face of Islam. My recent visit to the United States had no political objectives. For I am a man of religion and not a man of politics.

I always welcome going anywhere to state my views boldly. I said in the United States, while in the company of one of our Christian brothers, namely Dr. Samuel Habib, that we, Muslims and Christians alike, in Egypt live lovingly as brothers and have been doing so for about 1400 years in one land and under one sky.

With regard to citizenship, there are no differences in duties and rights between Muslims and Christians. Our Christian brothers enjoy equal rights and have equal obligations with the Muslims. This is a fundamental precept which really exists. I have explained to them that Islam is innocent of blind fanaticism, sedition, murder, and destruction and that attacks on tourists, whatever their nationalities may be, are a departure from the teachings of religion.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Do you feel that the visit has achieved the objectives you actually sought from it?]

[Tantawi] The results have been good. This is because I and those in whose company I was, have succeeded in explaining to the American people that we in Egypt overwhelmingly live in peace and security and that the crimes that take place are individual cases and are bound to end and that the state and all its institutions are working hard to spread security. We have explained to them that the divine religions are innocent of what is taking place and that they should not say that religious groups have killed this or that person, because he who commits an act of murder is called a terrorist and terrorists cannot belong to any religious group, for religions are innocent of all types of aggression. Religion protects honor, life, and human dignity. The Muslims are obligated by their religion to defend their nation, dignity, honor, and property. The Holy Koran says: "Whosoever defends himself after he has suffered wrong—for such, there is no way (to blame) against them. The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress mankind."

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The state's fight against what it calls "terrorist groups" has sparked objections from so many quarters on the basis that the issue is confined to the security framework. Do you accept and approve of such objections?

[Tantawi] Personally, in all my lectures and conferences, I have always stressed that oppression is wrong be it from the ruler or the ruled, because wrong is indivisible just as virtues are indivisible. God Almighty has ordered us to be just in our rulings. The Holy Koran says that he who kills one single man would be as though he has killed all mankind, and he who gives life to one single person would be as though he had given life to all mankind.

The Koran does not distinguish between a Christian and a Jew. The crime would be the same if it was committed against a Christian, a Jew, or a Muslim. The blessing of security is one of the most precious blessings granted by God. It was for this reason that the Islamic religious laws prohibited murder.

We pray to God from our hearts to guide the steps of those sons of ours who have been lured by the devil and deceived by the ignorant who used them to serve Satan. For who says that the planting of a bomb on a train or in front of a building or in a car is an act of patriotism or struggle? Who says also that attacking a member of the security forces is an act of strife? For this reason, we are against murder and terrorism in all its forms whatever they may be. We fight oppression regardless of what source it comes from. We pray to God to guide our sons along the right path.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] You have said in the past that the security institutions' killing the extremist groups was permissible under Islamic religious laws because it falls within the framework of punishment. Your statements have been interpreted as siding with the authorities. What do you say about that?

[Tantawi] The Koran is clear in its legislation. It says: "Whosoever kills a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind"—verily God has said the truth. If we left society to live in anarchy and let one person commit an aggression against another, then society will lose its security and peace and consequently we will lose all good. Societies never progress except when the blessing of security reigns over them.

We hope those sons will find their way to the right path. But if the ignorant persists with his ignorance, and the oppressor persists with his oppression and the saboteur persists with his acts of sabotage, then all that we can do is to abide by what God Almighty has said: "There is life in punishment." This is because the Islamic religion calls for love and the dissemination of security. We must attribute crimes to those committing them and not to religions. The detonation of a bomb in any place does not mean that Islam or Christianity was behind such a crime. Religions are innocent of such acts which should not be attributed to them. Justice dictates that crimes should be attributed to those who commit them.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Do you feel that this policy has brought about the desired results?

[Tantawi] Egypt, by its tolerant face, and its women and men, live in security, peace, love, and human fraternity. The ruler loves those whom he rules and the ruled love their ruler. Differences of opinion do not detract from that love. We do not deny that errors are committed and we admit that they do exist because we are only human.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What about the excesses monitored by human rights organizations in Egypt and publicized by the Western media?

[Tantawi] I say that those Western information media which accuse Egypt of violating human rights should provide material proofs of what they claim. But what I personally feel and see is that Egypt is now and has been for several years living under the umbrella of justice and security. I do not feel that there is any oppression committed against anyone. If such an act of oppression takes place, then we would be against it be it committed by the ruler or the ruled. We support justice be it from the ruler or from the ruled.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Some have considered your agreement to visit Israel an act of defiance to the feelings of Muslims and Christians who reject the normalization of relations with Israel, particularly after the Al-Azhar rector had publicly declared his refusal to visit Israel or meet with the Israelis in Cairo. What do you have to say about that?

[Tantawi] If my visit to Israel will bring good to my nation and religion, then I welcome it. But if it will not bring any good, then let it not be. I have not received an invitation to visit Israel. But if Yasir 'Arafat were to invite me to visit Gaza, then I would welcome his invitation. If he invites me also to visit Jerusalem, then I would welcome his invitation. What is wrong in our declaring our views courageously in their [the Israelis'] own territories? Those who shout from the outside are the cowards.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How about your meeting with Weizman?

[Tantawi] I am ready to meet with even those above Weizman. I repeat that I do not mind meeting any person on the face of the earth as long as I stand on firm ground.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] But how do you know that your visit will bring good and benefit?

[Tantawi] The official quarters are the ones who can decide whether this visit is essential and will bring good or not. They hold the final decision.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Can we consider the political quarters to be the principal touchstone in religious positions?

[Tantawi] We and the responsible officials have mutual confidence. They are the ones who count and give advice in this precise issue. We always hold consultations with them and they resort to me in religious matters, in which I would have the last say. I will say it again, I am not a man of politics but a man of religion.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The population conference, family organization, bank interests, and visiting Israel are all issues in which you have conflicts of opinion with the Al- Azhar rector and Ulemas. This contradiction arouses great surprise among the majority of Muslims. How do you explain this contradiction of views?

[Tantawi] The conflict between us and Al-Azhar is akin to that which exists between the jurisprudence experts of the various creeds and akin to the conflict that existed between Abu Hanifah and Ibn Hanbal [Two of the four senior Sunni Imams who had their own specific interpretations of religious matters]. We only differ on secondary matters but we are all in agreement about fundamental matters.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The multiplicity of religious opinions has caused religious confusion and disorder among people.

[Tantawi] Dar al-Fatwa [the formal religious opinion institution] is the one responsible for the issuing of formal religious rulings [Fatwas]. It comprises an elite of the Al-Azhar Ulemas. If some of the Al-Azhar Ulemas from outside the Dar Al- Fatwa had different opinions which rectify any error of opinion we might have fallen into, then we would welcome their opinions.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Could we consider this conflict of religious opinions to fall within the framework of religious jurisprudence?

[Tantawi] We can never make progress without jurisprudence. The value of Ulemas and their exploration of what would bring good to people has become vital under the present conditions. But when we talk of jurisprudence, it must be confined to matters that deserve such jurisprudence. But beliefs and all religious matters that have been established by virtue of the Koran and the Sunna cannot accept any jurisprudence, as there can be no jurisprudence in matters clarified by text [i.e. Koran and the Prophet's sayings]. But matters which are open to controversy such as matters that concern people's worldly life or their conflicts, these can accept jurisprudence. But a jurisprudence that is based on bragging cannot be acceptable.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What if the mufti commits an error?

[Tantawi] Nobody is immune to error, and the freedom of reply is guaranteed to all, but it should be exercised in a scientific, logical, and gentlemanly manner.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Still within the same framework: Conflict has been renewed between you and the Al-Azhar rector over the question of the new marriage certificate. The Al-Azhar rector has rejected it but you have accepted it and your acceptance was akin to your submission to the demands of women's organizations and societies which demand equality between men and women. What do you say to that?

[Tantawi] I have not heard the views of the others. All that I would like to say, however, is that we received a document from the Ministry of Justice and it was our duty to give a sound reply to it. We said that what the document contained was on the whole consistent with the marriage contract. We, however, had some different observations pertaining to matters which we did not think to be proper, and said that it would be better if they were not included in what the document had stated in respect of the marriage contract because marriages are founded on love and mercy and not on conditions dictated by one side on the other.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What about the equality advocated by some societies?

[Tantawi] There is equality between men and women in respect of the right to knowledge and to good work that brings benefit to the community. The good deeds that bring benefit and which God has permitted can be carried out by men and women alike and there is no difference between them in matters of good deeds. Furthermore, Islamic religious laws have also equated between men and women in matters of human dignity. The Islamic religious laws have also equated men and women in what is known as civil rights such as selling and buying and all sorts of transactions. From all this we can conclude that the Islamic religious laws base societies on cooperation between men and women. This cooperation makes men respect women and all would cooperate together in good deeds and piety.

Libya

Country Said Behind Easing of Egypt-Sudan Tension

NC1503154195 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 10 Mar 95 p 1, 6

[Report by Mahmud Bakri]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-SHA'B has learned that the Libyan Jamahiryah recently made strenuous efforts to calm the tense atmosphere in Egyptian-Sudanese relations after certain Egyptian diplomatic sources had voiced fears over the appointment of new Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Tahah, who is said to be a hardliner concerning the relations with Egypt.

The Libyan Jamahiryah conveyed to the Sudanese Government contents of Egyptian reports which indicate that the appointment of 'Ali 'Uthman and the dismissal of former Foreign Minister Dr. Husayn Abu-Salih might steer Egyptian-Sudanese relations onto a new course in the next stage, particularly given the continuing differences between the two countries over the border issue of Hala'ib.

The Libyan efforts have yielded positive results. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has received a message from his Sudanese counterpart 'Ali 'Uthman, reiterating his wish to overcome past differences. He also noted that his country wants to begin a new era in the relations between the two countries and that the Sudanese Foreign Ministry will make the utmost efforts to show its goodwill toward Egypt.

In his message, the Sudanese minister stressed the need for resuming river navigation between the two countries, noting that this would represent a sound step toward improving the relations between Egypt and Sudan. He invited 'Amr Musa to visit Sudan as soon as possible, pointing out that this visit will reflect positively on the course of relations between the two countries.

Cairo has received the message of 'Ali 'Uthman with extreme satisfaction. Immediately afterward, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa cabled 'Ali 'Uthman, congratulating him on his new post and accepting the invitation to visit Sudan. Musa also invited the Sudanese minister to visit Cairo.

These contacts coincided with other Sudanese contacts with the Egyptian Ministry of Transport concerning the restoration of river navigation between the two countries.

Within this context, the Libyan Jamahiriyah continues its efforts to maintain the existing momentum to promote relations between the two countries. Libya is currently trying to convene a meeting between the two foreign ministers preparatory to holding a summit between Presidents Husni Mubarak and 'Umar al-Bashir. The meeting will be devoted to defusing tension in the relations and to working out a solution to the border dispute over Hala'ib.

Morocco

King Hassan II Delivers Speech at White House

LD1503190595 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[Speech by King Hassan II the White House in Washington, following President Clinton's welcoming speech—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Praise be to God. May God's prayers and peace be upon our Lord the Messenger of God, his kin and companions. Your Excellencies, the President of the United States of America and our great friend. [passage omitted]

Mr. President, here on this very spot where you and I now stand, humanity witnessed a historic moment when all eyes turned to the White House entrance to witness the birth of a historic event, fulfilling a hope long entertained by the forces of good and arousing the will to expand peace throughout the world.

This happened on Monday morning, 13 September 1993, at 1100. This happened as President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin stood on either side of you, and with your blessing, the historic handshake took place ending an era of war that had lasted for more than 40 years. During those years, lives were wasted, assets squandered, hate and rancor were widespread, and human efforts for development and construction in the Middle East region annihilated. The region became a permanent hotbed of tension lacking security and threatening world peace. [passage omitted]

This event came as a surprise to many who believed that it would be either impossible to achieve, or the result of pure fantasy. As for us, we were not surprised. We were in fact expecting such an event to occur, and for two reasons.

First, we believe in the dynamics of history because we experienced its decisive effectiveness in changing the course of events when we waged a bitter struggle to regain our independence. At that time, regaining independence seemed an illusion and impossible, but the dynamics of history and our convictions and that of our people in its effectiveness propelled our struggle to impose independence and to turn it into reality;

Second, Mr. President, because we were following the birth of this event through its consecutive stages, working to guide it in the direction of the dynamics of history, and because we observed, with hope and expectations, that the Palestinians and the Israelis whom we used to receive separately expressed to us their desire to achieve peace even though they did not announce this publicly.

However, this new-born peace appears to be fraught with dangers because it is not a comprehensive peace and has not taken place in all the tracks concerned. For the steps made by the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations need to accelerate the peace process away from any equivocation liable to cause it to falter.

Mr. President, we look forward to the talks that will take place between us and that will cover important issues in several areas, be it with respect to our bilateral relations or with respect to international relations.

We are certain that these negotiations will be both positive and fruitful and will lead to the convergence of our points of view because everything unites our basic choices and nothing can lead to a misunderstanding.

In today's world, the reality of political relations should reflect that of economic relations and that is why we aspire to have our economic ties up to the level of our distinguished historic ties. [passage omitted]

Mr. President, thank you again and God help you. [preceding sentence spoken in English] [applause]

Meets With Clinton, Investors

LD1603014595 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Hassan II had a first round of talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in the White House where his majesty was accorded a great official welcome by President Clinton. Also, the gracious King made a speech before the American association of private investors.

Here is a dispatch from the team of radio reporters in Washington:

The American president said that the realization of peace in the Middle East is a great deal indebted to the foresight of his majesty and to his efforts and wisdom. He pointed out that the quiet diplomacy of his majesty facilitated the talks and contacts between many Arab and Israeli leaders.

Subsequently, the gracious King announced that there is a complete harmony in the stands and relations between the United States and Morocco.

The gracious king and President Bill Clinton were speaking at a press conference which they held following talks they had today in the White House at the beginning of the state visit of his majesty to the United States.

The American president said that for this reason the process was started under the leadership of his majesty at the economic summit for the Middle East and North Africa aiming at encouraging the economic integration in both regions.

Regarding bilateral cooperation, the American President made clear that an agreement had been reached to establish an economic partnership for achieving prosperity for the peoples of the two countries, recalling the agreement Morocco and private American investors had signed in Washington.

His majesty the king pointed out that a large number of issues of common interest were discussed. He said the American President would be proud of the outcome of his work at the White House during the last two years.

His majesty the king observed that the world in which we live can never have separation and consequently there is no reason to have good relations and not to have economic relations of the same level. His majesty expressed the hope that the efforts would be united and concerted in order to realize a better future for the peoples of the two countries.

The gracious king concluded at the end of his speech that the United States has its own view and Morocco also has its own view. But he observed that the stands of the two countries are not different.

The leaders of two countries answered questions of the U.S., Maghreban, Arab, and international media representatives who came in good number to follow up this historic event.

The questions of the newsmen centered on various issues of the Middle East and bilateral cooperation and the conditions in the Arab world and North Africa.

At the end of the press conference of U.S. President Bill Clinton and his majesty the king, the gracious king said good bye to the American president and proceeded to the headquarters of the overseas association of American private investors where he attended a meeting on encouraging economic partnership between Morocco and the United States.

The gracious King made a speech in which he affirmed that the time has come that American investors should consider the opportunities available to them in Morocco, explaining that when Morocco invites American businessmen to invest in Morocco it is trying, like the United States, to realize two aims: First, prosperity of man in the coming century and second, to create work opportunities, because security in the entire world is not measured by the quantity and quality of the weapons but by social stability and family equilibrium and the dignity of man.

The gracious King stressed that the desire to make man the target of development has been the objective of Morocco for centuries. He pointed out that Morocco aspires to attracting investments which provide a dignified life for its nationals.

The beloved king insisted that the desire to make the human being the main target of the development has been Morocco's aim for centuries, pointing out that Morocco has been hoping to attract investments which would bring about a better life for its citizen.

[Begin King Hassan recording, in French] [passage omitted] A while ago and after my talks with his excellency President Bill Clinton, the U.S. President, there was the traditional press conference.

Following a question on investments in Morocco, I said: Unfortunately, the United States and Morocco have been giving the impression that, when it comes to dealings between countries, everything looks to go very well politically. We have the same ideals, we work towards the same goals, everyone according to his abilities. But we do not have a joint economic agenda. I think that time has come that our American friends should consider the possibilities which my country can offer them. [passage omitted] [end recording] [passage omitted]

Sudan

UN Human Rights Commission Resolution Rejected

EA1003212095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu, justice minister and attorney general, has said that the UN Human Rights Commission resolution condemning Sudan for violating human rights is a resolution characterized by formalism, and a repetition of previous resolutions that are not based on reality. He said the resolution of condemnation is a battle against the faith that is aimed at destabilizing Sudan.

His excellency told AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH newspaper that the new element in the resolution concerning Sudan is the inclusion of new issues to excite public opinion. Shiddu said Sudan strongly rejects any accusations that are not based on reality, particularly because Sudanese society has been confirmed as one which respects human rights.

Western Media Coverage of Rights Criticized

EA1403190395 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The regular forum of the Foreign Ministry was today briefed on the issue of human rights which was recently discussed at the human rights conference in Geneva. The rapporteur of the advisory council of human rights and member of Sudan's delegation to the conference, Dr. Ahmad al-Mufti, said the conference had discussed the role of the Western media regarding human rights and how it had served to distort Sudan's image and its civilized orientation while ignoring the inhuman violation of human rights in a number of Western countries. Dr. al-Mufti said the subject of human rights was of great concern to Sudan.

The forum had earlier reviewed some of the deliberations of the UN Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen.

Saudi Arabia

CDLR Communique on Sit-Ins, Future Activities

MS1503131095 London CDLR MONITOR 14 Mar]

[Communique No. 24 of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia, CDLR—received by fax 14 March]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Protests To Go Ahead...

Five months have passed since the arrests of the reformers, university professors and hundreds of the young, faithful Muslims and now the blessed month of Ramadan is passing away and they are still detained.

The legitimate leaders within the country began preparation for a series of public activities directly after the arrests, to demonstrate their opposition to the oppressive policies of the regime. However, these activities were postponed due to promises given by official scholars headed by Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Ibn-Baz, that the case would be satisfactorily solved after a short period of time. The last of the promises stated that the case may be concluded in Ramadan. This promise persuaded the legitimate leaders to decide to delay the planned activities until after the month of Ramadan and therefore issued directives to everyone to "cool down."

As Ramadan was the final chance, the legitimate leaders have decided that the three months following Ramadan, which lead up to the Hajj season, will be months of public activities, protests and "sit-ins" against the situation of the country at present. The month of Ramadan is to be a month of preparation for the forthcoming events. The supporters are requested, during this time, to make good use of the enthusiasm of the people during Ramadan to encourage them to help further our cause.

We would also request the maximum use of the increased gathering of people in Mecca at this time to prepare for the future activities beginning after Eid. The first "sit-in," in Sha'Allah [God Willing], was decided by the legitimate leaders to take place on the first Friday of the month of Shawwal (18th of March 1995) at the mosque of 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Turayi in Riyadh, after the Jum'ah prayer and to last for the duration of one hour. There will be recitation of Koran and Du'a (supplications). Therefore, we request everyone to prepare for this preliminary appointment, and to distribute this communique in the widest range possible and to make all possible efforts to ensure that this protest will proceed successfully.

This appointment may be changed, depending upon any changes that may occur with regard to the present situation, such as the release of the detainees.

CDLR Communique on Scholars' Arrests

MS1503135695 London CDLR MONITOR 14 Mar]

[Communique No. 25 of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia (CDLR)—received by fax 14 March]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

A New Campaign of Arrests on Reformers...

In a new intensified campaign of arrests the authorities detained another group of scholars and university professors from amongst the prominent figures of the reform movement.

At dawn, on 5th March, Shaykh and Dr. Muhammad al-Qahtani was arrested in the mosque after the Fajr (Dawn) prayer, and the intelligence forces spent several hours on a thorough search of his house.

This operation was led by, Ahmad Arafa, the head of Mecca's intelligence forces. The authorities refused to allow the Shaykh to take his wife, who is suffering ill health, to the hospital.

The Shaykh is a lecturer in Islamic Beliefs and Doctrines at the the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca. He was also the Imam and public speaker of al-Awali Mosque in Mecca before he was prevented from speaking in public a year ago.

The Shaykh is an honourable Scholar and has written many famous and popular books and has an excellent reputation and high standing with the people of Mecca and the youth of the city.

On the same day in Riyadh, Shaykh and Dr. Sa'id Ibn-Zu'ayr was also arrested. The Shaykh is a lecturer of Islamic Media Studies at al-Imam University. Also arrested was Shaykh and Dr. Bishr al-Bishr the lecturer of Islamic Beliefs and Doctrines at Al Imam University.

Both Shaykhs are from the most prominent and reputable scholars of Riyadh and have been involved in many notable activities in the reform process. They have recorded a large number of lectures on audio cassettes and have published many booklets related to the reform movement.

The Committee has also learned that orders have been issued for the arrest of Shaykh and Dr. Nasir al-'Umar, who is one of the most prominent scholars in Riyadh and who enjoys great popularity amongst the youth of Riyadh. The Shaykh has been in hiding since yesterday, and the intelligence forces have put his house, and the houses of his parents and relations, under siege in Riyadh and Qasim.

CDLR Bulletin on Escalating the 'Case for Reform'

MS1603110295 London CDLR MONITOR in English 3 Mar 95

[Bulletin No. 37 of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia (CDLR)—received by fax 14 March]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Your Right To Know—Eid has returned to witness Chaos...

Eid has returned and found decent, respectable people imprisoned, the reform process under siege and the young Muslims pursued by the security and intelligence forces.

Eid has returned to witness the security and safety of the country disintegrating, its economy in collapse and the control of the country in the grip of a clique of criminals.

I wonder if there will be a revival, and if there is any glimmer of hope for this Noble Nation. The month of Ramadan has gone and the Government is still stubborn and challenging in its attitude. The reformers, professors and many others are still languishing in prison. The Government insists ever more strongly on its stand towards the reformers, while at the same time they release thousands of criminals whilst the reformers are still behind bars with not even a hint of a release in the near future.

Brothers and Sisters, we would like to remind you that the good efforts that were made by Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Ibn-Baz and others have been exhausted by the end of Ramadan and now there is no evidence left for those who argue that private personal communications should be used to solve the problem, especially after thousands of criminals have been released, leaving the prisons full of reformers and preachers whose only crime was attempting to save the country from the inevitable social, political and economical collapse which has been brought about through the leadership of al Sa'ud. This is surely a challenge to the will of the Nation.

Therefore, we would like to confirm the call of the legitimate leaders to prepare for public work in the coming months. We would also confirm that the appointment of the first "sit-in" protest will be in the mosque of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Turayi in Riyadh (King Abdul Aziz) and the mosque of Shaykh Safar al-Hawali in Jeddah, after the Jum'ah prayer on the third Friday of Shawwal and will last for one hour.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we do not need to remind you that other Nation have successfully removed their oppressors by themselves and removed dictatorships from their countries. Therefore, show us, and all the Muslims, your determination to force change in our country and remove oppression.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Committee, with the collaboration of the legitimate leaders, intends to continue with various activities which will reach a peak during the Hajj season. Therefore, we request everyone to prepare to escalate the case for reform during the coming months, and to plan for maximum use of the Hajj season to further our aims. Despite the fact that we have prepared a programme of events for that season, which will be announced at the appropriate time, we would be extremely pleased to receive your thoughts, ideas or suggestions as to the best methods to employ in order to gain the paramount benefit for our cause. We hope, therefore, that you will supply us with some fresh ideas, either by letter, fax or phone, as soon as possible in order for us to include any suitable ideas in our programme.

We are still receiving very encouraging communications regarding the psychological preparation of our Muslim Youth, and their increasing enthusiasm for such activities is particularly encouraging.

Some of the people who contacted us requested the completion of the article regarding the legitimisation of these activities, and to give an answer regarding a query that said, "A Muslim cannot tie his baggage and intend to travel to other than the three sacred mosques." We would reply to this query, with the help of Allah, in that what was forbidden was the tying of baggage and travelling to the mosque or places just for the place itself. It can never be said that just tying your baggage is forbidden for any reason as it was confirmed in Koran, Sunnah and Ijma of the legitimacy of travelling for the religious or general reasons. The Muslims are still "tying their baggage" and travelling singly and in groups for Jihad, seeking knowledge, business, marriage etc. None of the Muslim scholars ever stated that a student of knowledge cannot travel to the mosque where his Shaykh teaches, or even be considered as tying their baggage to travel to a mosque, Scholars throughout Islamic history, travelled between countries, visited their mosques where the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) [Peace Be Upon Him] were taught, and the stations of Muslims on the way to Jihad were mosques.

As an example of this, Al Kufah's mosque in Iraq was the station, or gathering point, for the Mujahidin to open Persia and the Eastern countries, while the Fustat Mosque in Egypt was the station for Mujahidin to open the western Arab countries and Africa. The Mujahidin used to reside in the mosques of those countries, and no one ever remarked that what the Prophet (PBUH) said about tying baggage to travel to the three sacred mosques should prevent Muslims from visiting other mosques.

The "sit-in" protest was not designated in the previously mentioned locations because of their particular significance, as they are no different to any other mosque. These locations were only chosen because of the central positions they occupy in the towns and in any case, the Brothers will be there to perform the Jum'ah prayer. There is, therefore absolutely no reason, or excuse, to consider travelling to the "sit-in" protest as "tying ones baggage" to those mosques, and for this reason the query that was raised is not applicable in this case. In actual fact, the ones who participate in the "sit-in" protest are considered as those who are inviting people towards good deeds and forbidding bad deeds. Those who participate in such an activity are considered as facing an unjust leader and are even considered as mujahids as they are committing themselves for the way of Allah. There will be nothing but reward from Allah for those who participate in Sha'Allah.

We have been informed that only a very insignificant number of our youth still have a few doubts and uncertainties with regard to this action, perhaps because they have not read the previous bulletins where the legitimacy of the protest was discussed in more detail. We would therefore advise them not to confuse their Brothers, and that they should look at the evidence presented in previous bulletins in order for them to remove their doubts and confusion.

We are confident that they will reach the same conclusions that the Committee has reached. The Committee is always prepared to listen to any criticism, correction, or advice, and we promise to judge our actions by the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (PBUH).

Know Your Leaders—Part II

Sultan Bin-'Abd-al'Aziz...

Informing the Nation about Sultan and his brothers is a legitimate necessity in order for the Nation to realise the reality of their leaders, their performance and personality so that the Nation is aware and able to make a decision as to whether to accept them as leaders or not.

Sultan Bin-'Abd-al'Aziz was born in 1924 and his first appearance was his appointment as Prince of Riyadh region. He then become known for taking the position of Defence Minister in 1964, a position he still holds today, as well as occupying a number of other impressive positions, such as second Deputy to the Prime Minister, Chairman of the High Council for Education, Chairman of the High Council for Islamic Affairs, Chairman of the High Council of Labour etc.

Sultan is the second oldest brother, Fahd being the first although he shares the same father with half-brothers, some of whom are older than him, such as 'Abdallah, Mish'al and Bandar. This poses a complex problem for Sultan with regard to his eagerness to ascend to the throne after King Fahd.

Close scrutiny of Sultan's life, personality and performance brings about the realisation of the success of al Sa'ud in taming the people of the area.

Sultan's crimes are not one or two, but a huge collection, one of them being the highly impressive image he created for the armed forces, at great expense, whilst during the Gulf War this was exposed as being complete fiction. Another crime is his embezzlement of tens of billions of riyals from the Nation's wealth.

If we consider investigating Sultan's personality first this will lead us to understand how much the Nation has been controlled by al Sa'ud. Sultan inherited none of his father's deviousness and ability for political manoeuvring, but he did inherit all the despicable traits of the family. Sultan is the most racist amongst al Sa'ud and insists on classifying people as masters and slaves. In the past, he refused to accept his son Bandar, because of his colour, and this rejection continued until the intervention of King Faysal.

Sultan calls the scholars and educated people by contemptuous names, especially those of whom he is jealous for their credibility amongst the people.

His general knowledge and education is negligible and people who have been associated with him have found that his knowledge does not go beyond his oppressive policies, his embezzlement of state funds and his expertise with women. Despite his fluency in speech, he lacks concentration and is susceptible to making faux pas and blunders in his speeches and statements. Due to his ignorance he fosters the theory of ineffectual education in order to ease the control and oppression of the people. Therefore, he has taken a firm stand in the past against any educational projects, including training abroad. For this reason, he has ridiculed his brothers after the phenomena of memorandums and messages by the reformers by saying, "You've done this to yourselves, you've allowed them to be educated!"

Sultan's inferiority complex and his inability to debate with logic and credibility has brought him to prefer the use of force and violence against any form of opposition. It was Sultan who was in favour of the campaign of imprisonment against the reformers. He stands firmly behind the campaign of oppression which was enacted last year and has carried on into this year. Our sources have informed us that it was Sultan who signed the arrest orders for the two Shaykhs, Safar and Salman. We were also informed that Sultan had been making efforts to produce a judicial order to begin a series of "Quick" executions, which would have taken place if certain persons had not intervened.

Sultan's personal behaviour and manners leave much to be desired. He would not hesitate to stop and spit at the highest ranking army officers in front of their friends or foreign dignitaries. The man is famous for his numerous infidelities and it is said that such practices have played a great role in the promotions, relations, and decisions taken by Sultan. The Committee has learned that external bodies have blackmailed the Kingdom and Sultan because of material evidence they hold against Sultan. This may explain the peculiarities in the Kingdom's policies with various countries.

Prince Sultan's religious discipline is described by people in close association with him as being so corrupt that as soon as he leaves public functions he hardly knows where the direction of Mecca is (Qibla). One of his cronies that had been newly appointed to his service was not aware of this fact and made the mistake of calling the prayer (Azan) Sultan promptly emerged and beat him very badly. The Prince holds a great deal of animosity in his heart towards Islamic activities in the country and it has been said by one of his close associates that he loses his temper when he sees photographs of the graduates from army colleges because of the numerous bearded faces on parade.

With regard of Sultan's use of his position for personal gain, we would find it difficult to believe that the Nation has ever seen anyone worse than Sultan in using his position to commit crimes.

His crimes do not just involve his weakening of the army and forcing it to seek help from foreign powers, but also include using his position to enable him to mastermind the most incredible embezzlement project in the world, to empower the corrupt and perverted, to permit western armies to control the area and to use his position to wage war on reform and reformers.

The criminally dishonest and deceitful media have succeeded in hiding all these crimes and turned Sultan's decision to seek help from the American's into an heroic act whilst the Nation was unaware of the hundreds of billions of dollars Sultan "spent" on the "false" army since he became Defence Minister. This is precisely ten times the amount Iraq has expended on its armed forces, so how can it be that Iraq is such a threat to the Kingdom? It has become evident that what is actually spent in reality does not come to 5 per cent of the total expenditure while the largest share of the commissions find their way into Sultan's pockets. The catastrophe is that the Gulf crisis has changed nothing, as the state of the armed forces is unchanged and the scale of embezzlement has increased. Meanwhile. Sultan is still abusing his position in the worst possible manner. Even with all this fraud and embezzlement Sultan does not appear to be content and so he also appropriates billions of dollars from other sources. For an example, the government granted him a piece of land which Sultan then sold back to the Govt. for more than 5 million dollars in order for them to construct the petro-chemicals project in Al Jubail. Sultan graciously agreed to accept payment in instalments, obviously due to his "generous" heart. This action led the Council of Ministers to applaud enthusiastically for several minutes while the media continued to sing his praise for several weeks on account of his noble sacrifice!

Sultan's arm also extends to many contracts outside the Ministry of Defence through scores of companies registered under false names. Even so, despite all these huge commissions and grants, he does not hesitate to confiscate people's properties if he so wishes, or alternatively he may well buy the property for the Ministry of Defence and then transfer it to his own personal ownership.

Sultan enjoys his influence in controlling money, army equipment and personnel, aeroplanes etc. and lives a life that even previous emperors would be envious of. The maintenance of his many and varied palaces is all paid for courtesy of the Defence department, as are his hunting and leisure trips, such as his recent adventure to Morocco which involved the transportation of 600 jeeps and cost an estimated 5 million riyals per day.

Despite the fact that Sultan has held the position of Defence Minister for many years, his dreadful personality and ugly nature have stood between him and the army's loyalty. This has led to feelings of jealousy towards his brother 'Abdallah, who has managed to instil loyalty into the National Guard. Sultan attempted to overcome this problem by creating a private militia which is tied to him personally for his own protection. Sultan's disaster with the army was repeated in the Yemeni fiasco, where he was exposed just as badly. His political stupidity and short-sightedness meant that he threw the whole weight of the Kingdom on the side of the Communists and embroiled the country in a huge financial and political debacle during that crisis, the result of this was that he very nearly brought the Kingdom to war with Yemen.

We would repeat that part of the evidence of the success of al Sa'ud in controlling the people of the peninsula is Sultan's continued occupation of such a position, with full authority, over many years. It is time for the Nation to rise up and fight for its dignity and pride.

This is only an introduction and we will publish more details and a greater analysis of this "Unique and historical" personality in our magazine.

News From Newspaper to Prison...

Journalist Saleh al-'Azzaz ended up in Al Ha'il prison after his brave criticism regarding the mobile phone farce as published in Al Yaum newspaper issue 7192 dated 13/9/1415H.

Mr al-'Azzaz directed his criticism to the Saudi Telecommunications companies and did not mention the ruling family at all. He still however, ended up in prison.

The Committee greets such commendable stands and confirms the fact that the Govt. cannot endure any type of criticism whatsoever, whether direct or indirect.

The Sacred Mosque and the Committee's Activities...

The response to the Committee's appeal to distribute bulletins and cassettes in the Sacred Mosque was hugely successful. The latest bulletin and cassette recording from the Committee were heavily distributed, despite the fact that around 400 intelligence personnel were stationed in and around the Mosque. In fact, the Committee came to know that many of the intelligence men turned a blind eye to such activities and some even participated in the distribution operation.

A Word of Truth...

Last Friday Prince Nayif prayed in Shaykh Talal Abu-Nurs mosque in Mecca. When the prayer finished, he was surprised by a brave young man who called him by his name and informed him that he should fear the Creator, Allah, and should cease his harassment and continued detention of the reformers. This caused a great disturbance in the Mosque with a large crowd of onlookers gathered, which greatly embarrassed Nayif.

The State's Response to the Committee...

Visitors to the Sacred Mosque in Mecca observed the unusual occurrence of the Mosque being cleaned for 2 continuous days. Apparently, this frenzied activity began immediately after the Committee published a report regarding changes in the cleaning contractors and the subsequent decline in the level of service. The Committee was informed that the authorities responsible requested an immediate improvement in the level of cleanliness in order to prove the Committee's claims as being false.

The ironical thing is that the worshippers who had previously read the report, realised immediately the reason for this action and contacted the Committee offering their thanks, as it was obvious that the reason for the sudden improvement was due to the Committee's report.

The Govt. presented Prince Nayif at a function unrelated to him, in fact it was a function to celebrate an award for charitable work which was actually won by Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, in an attempt to show that Nayif is present and is in full understanding and co- operation with Salman and that there is no dispute between them. Once again, this show of loyalty and brotherly love was to prove the Committee wrong regarding its reports of internal disputes within the family.

We in the Committee feel very proud that we have succeeded in forcing al Sa'ud into such a position that they feel that they have to respond immediately to our reports.

Prince Salman and His Image...

After the great losses Salman Ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz's reputation has suffered as a result of our reports and also due to the Communique from the Committee of Reform and Advice, the Prince attempted to improve his image and reputation through the media by putting forward an internal campaign in the local newspapers.

One newspaper was practically devoted to Prince Salman. The Prince attempted to present his image, during this campaign, as being a decent "good guy!" This could be an attempt to present himself in a favourable image before the Committee publishes its report on him in the "Know Your Leaders" series.

Salman also sought help from various Shaykhs in order to save his charitable institution. This led Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin to personally help in collecting donations for the institution, even though he knows exactly where the money will finally come to rest.

We would therefore advise the students of the Shaykh to alert him to this point so that he does not continue to be involved in taking money from Muslims for no good reason. For the Shaykh's knowledge, one of the "charities" the donations are spent on is the payment of princely debts, according to information learnt from banking sources.

Many businessmen and traders complain about the forceful methods used by Prince Salman to collect donations, where he forces them to pay large amounts of money to this institution every year. While we sympathise with them and publish their suffering here, we also admonish them for being so weak, and we would remind them that the Govt. needs them more than they need the Govt., due to the unstable economic situation which does not allow the Govt. to place too much pressure on businesses.

Intelligence Men...

People who work in the intelligence dept. are usually ignored after they have been exposed. This was the fate awaiting Ibrahim Ibn-Husayin, who was the military attache at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Kuwait, after he was exposed by the group Ansar al-Haqq, which he himself was investigating.

Dumat al-Jandal...

Green electrical meters spread in Dumat al-Jandal, as these days the citizens have to provide themselves with a meter in order to ensure an electricity supply. The electricity companies apparently have no meters available.

Also in Dumat al-Jandal, a hospital of a 100 bed capacity is still under construction eight years after the project began.

Christopher Reportedly Tells Fahd Anti-Iraq Plan 'Failed'

JN1503200295 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] THE NEW YORK TIMES yesterday published a report by its correspondent, who accompanied U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his recent tour of Saudi Arabia and Syria, which says that Christopher informed the Saudi king of the failure of a plot, which was planned by the U.S. Administration against Iraq. Christopher added that the plan failed because it was exposed due to the exaggerations some collaborators made to the U.S. Administration about their assessments. Among those collaborators is Jalal Talabani, who failed to achieve the objectives given him and was put in an embarrassing position. The American newspaper adds: There is no indication that the U.S. Administration's collaborators can achieve any tangible results.

'Very Strict' Measures at Border With Jordan Noted

JN1503182295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the information published by THE NEW YORK TIMES yesterday about a coup attempt against Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, which was led by retired Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i who fled to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after the failure of his attempt, press information said that the Iraqi authorities have, since last night, been conducting strict search operations on the Iraqi-Jordanian borders.

A journalist working for AFP said that it took four hours to process his travel documents at the border yesterday when he was returning from Baghdad to Amman.

Other travelers said that the usually strict measures were very strict yesterday, noting that customs officers went so far as to remove and search car seats and examine motors.

The AFP journalist said that the Iraqi Army has set up a large number of checkpoints on the roads to the capital, Baghdad.

Today, for the first time, a newspaper in Baghdad, hinted at attacks on the Iraqi Army in the southern part of the country. The newspaper BABIL, supervised by the Iraqi president's son, 'Udayy Saddam Husayn, said that "we should expect the escalation of attacks which are instigated by the United States in the north, and lower level attacks in some areas in the the south."

The Iraqi opposition spoke about battles in southern Iraq. The Iraqi newspapers have recently said that a battle took place between the army and the Kurdish fighters in the north, but they did not touch on any clashes in the south.

Envoy on Blockade, Clashes With Kurds, Israel

NC1503184795 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 8

[Interview with Nabil Najm, permanent delegate to the Arab League, by Ahmad Murad; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Murad] How do you explain the U.S. total refusal to lift the blockade on Iraq?

[Najm] Iraq absolutely does not find the U.S. position unusual. In fact, Iraq was expecting it. Iraq based this expectation on the U.S. Administration's constant hostile stance toward Iraq. The U.S. stance reflects a state of uneasiness on the part of the decisionmakers there, now that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under Resolution 687. Accordingly, the Security Council is required to apply Paragraph 22 of the aforesaid resolution, which explicitly refers to lifting the embargo on oil and trade dealing.

[Murad] You referred to the uneasiness of the United States, but how does this square with the fact that the United States has secured the support of 10 out of 15 Security Council members to maintain the international blockade imposed on Iraq?

[Najm] The U.S. position is based on the continuation of the blockade against Iraq and on creating excuses and pretexts a few days before the sanctions are reviewed. However, all political observers agree that Albright's tour reflected the uneasiness within the U.S. Administration. This administration realizes that an actual trend exists among the majority of the Security Council members, including three permanent members, toward implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 after Iraq had complied with Section C of the same resolution and rendered all mass-destruction weapons ineffective. According to the legal interpretation of this resolution, the embargo on oil and on trade deals must be lifted as soon as this result is attained. In addition, the United States will have to make a decision in April about the permanent monitoring program which started temporarily—as they said at the time—in November 1994. Some important circles within the Security Council stated that six months would be adequate to test the efficiency of this system. This system has proved to be effective. Consequently, the United States finds itself in a corner since it is supposed to ease or to agree to lift the sanctions on Iraq and hence, it made some moves because it does not want the blockade to be lifted.

[Murad] But there is a clear reference by Albright affirming that Iraq has not fully complied with Section C of Resolution 687, particularly regarding the bacteriological weapons.

[Najm] It isn't Albright who decides whether or not Iraq has complied. The special commission responsible for reviewing Iraq's weapons, which is headed by UN envoy Rolf Ekeus, is the one that determines this. So far, the reports made by this commission are positive and indicate that Iraq is totally clear of mass-destruction weapons and ballistic missiles.

[Murad] So we have to wait for the final report to be submitted by Ekeus following its visit to Iraq on 10 April. But don't you expect Ekeus to come under "a certain pressure" to produce a report that contradicts reality and facts?

[Najm] We do not rule this out because the United States, whose president has sent written messages that were carried by Albright to some countries, has tried to put pressure on these states so as not to object to the U.S. will or to side with the majority of the Security Council members, particularly France, China, and Russia, which call for lifting the blockade on Iraq.

[Murad] The U.S. Administration recently referred to uprisings of the Iraqi people. The administration even talked about a coup attempt in Iraq.

[Najm] We got used to such rumors, particularly before the UN Security Council's debates on the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The continuing blockade on Iraq has indeed generated negative repercussions, which have also affected the behavior of the Iraqis. But all these rumors are baseless and are part of tendentious campaigns and their objectives are exposed. I believe there are diplomatic missions in Baghdad that are well aware of the internal conditions in Iraq.

Regarding the disturbances in northern Iraq, these events are taking place among Kurdish factions. The Iraqi Government had cautioned that such events are expected as a result of foreign interventions and of the so-called "no-fly zone."

[Murad] But it is said that Iraq started the clashes with the Kurdish forces, which have been raging since 27 March 1994.

[Najm] I wish those who are propagating these reports would read the statements of Mas'ud Barzani in which he denied the Iraqi forces' involvement in these clashes, while another Kurdish party talked about such stories. Meanwhile, an Iraqi military source confirmed that some sectors of the Iraqi Army were provoked and attacked by a group from a Kurdish faction. Such provocative actions were incited with the aim of creating a situation that would reflect negatively on the UN Security Council's deliberations.

Furthermore, Iraqi military intelligence sources stress that the U.S. intelligence service was responsible for motivating certain Kurdish elements to attack the Iraqi forces. This prompted the Iraqi forces to respond to such attacks only. This is what happened.

[Murad] Is it normal that under the current conditions in Iraq 17 palaces and other summer resorts are built?

[Najm] First of all you must understand that the construction process in Iraq has covered all walks of life. This process also covered all that had been destroyed by the aggression. These include bridges, oil refineries, hospitals, mosques, churches, and schools. I would also like to say that palaces and government buildings were built but with Iraqi funds and Iraqi currency, and not with hard currency because we did not import any material from abroad to reconstruct what was destroyed.

My question is: Do those who criticize our construction process want us to live in permanent darkness? And most important what does this have to do with the blockade? The reconstruction is meant to elevate the morale of the Iraqi people. Why does the United States insist on inciting things and on violating the provisions and resolutions?

[Murad] Was Iraq not surprised that Albright's tour included Kuwait, which is not a member in the current UN Security Council session?

[Najm] Before Albright's tour there was a tour by the Kuwaiti foreign minister. Both tours had the same objective. It seems that the Kuwaiti minister's tour failed to achieve its objectives, and perhaps this is why the United States threatened to use the veto. The fact that the United States implied the possibility of using the veto is enough to show the weakness of the U.S. stance and concern.

[Murad] Can yesterday's meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the foreign ministers of the Gulf states be considered part of this effort?

[Najm] I think U.S. State Department sources have said that the meeting will deal, among other things, with the continuation of the embargo against Iraq, because there are voices within the Arab Gulf states calling for alleviating the embargo.

[Murad] The U.S. Administration mentioned Security Council Resolutions 706 and 712, which allow Iraq to export $1.6 billion worth of oil annually to spend on food and humanitarian needs. Why are you refusing to discuss this?

[Najm] This is a forgery of facts; we have gone beyond these resolutions. We implemented the resolutions relevant to the embargo and we are demanding that the others meet their obligations. Albright tried to fool the countries she visited by raising this subject, because this also has nothing to do with the embargo.

[Murad] If the issue is raised in today's [Security Council] session, will Iraq cooperate in implementing the resolutions?

[Najm] We cooperated with the Security Council to implement the two resolutions, and we have well-defined views on how to do it. But the United States insists on implementing these resolutions in a provocative way and in a manner that constitutes a flagrant and explicit interference in Iraq's internal affairs. Anyway, we are now beyond these resolutions; there are clear legal and practical bases for lifting the embargo against Iraq.

[Murad] Israeli sources spoke of an oral message Yasir 'Arafat conveyed to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin from President Saddam Husayn. What is the truth of this?

[Najm] There is an official Palestinian denial of this report. For us in Iraq, this issue is a cause for ridicule, and it is not worth commenting on. This is one of the methods Israel is using to shuffle cards and impose further frustration on the Arab people, particularly on the Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories. Iraq always refuted such allegations in the past, which came from the same source, Israel and the Israeli Army radio.

[Murad] There are big question marks concerning the position of some Arab countries, especially the Arab League, toward the blockade against Iraq. How do you view this?

[Najm] The position of the Arab countries, in general, causes bitterness for Iraqi citizens. While we find non-Arab countries and international organizations calling for lifting the embargo and sometimes helping with humanitarian supplies, we find that some Arab countries insist on, call for, and instigate for continuing the embargo. The bitterness lies, in particular, in the Arab position, which is either silent or contributing to the continuation of the blockade.

Regarding the Arab League, it is an instrument or an institution that expresses the policies of the Arab countries.

'Criminal' Albright Seen Seeking Christopher's Post

JN1603115695 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 2 Mar 95 p 7

["Sidelines" column by Sabri Hammadi: "The Search for False Witnesses"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What Mrs. Albright says about the results of her visit to this or that capital is not important, now that it has become clear to the followers of her tour that the results she announces have nothing to do with the real stands of the capitals she has visited.

When she threatens to use the veto against any attempt to lift the embargo on Iraq, her threat means she personally testifies to her administration's isolation and failure to face the international trend which calls for lifting, or alleviating, the embargo on Iraq.

Albright's mission is definitely difficult, not only because most countries, including the UN Security Council member states, are now fully aware of the real motives of the hostile U.S. attitude toward Iraq, but also because the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations has embarked on this tour to look for false witnesses to absolve the U.S. Administration of the genocide it has committed against our patient and struggling people. Of course, not all the Security Council members are ready to make false statements and to participate in this crime.

Even if we suppose that Albright has managed by any means to find some false witnesses, what is definite is that Albright's success will be a temporary one which will not last more than one or two months. Experience with the United States has established that any alliance which is based on temptation, intimidation, and extortion cannot last long because it carries the factors of its own dismantlement and collapse.

If, as it appears, it is correct that the Clinton administration has entrusted the embargo file to Mrs. Albright, then it is also correct that the unusual enthusiasm which this old hag has shown toward maintaining the embargo on Iraq is one of the main reasons which have made the U.S. State Department leave this file to its UN ambassador. But, is it right to show such abnormal and illogical enthusiasm in dealing with a political situation which is better handled by rationalism, objectiveness, and fairness?

As the days pass by, more world states become convinced that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and that the United States' unjustifiable persistence in continuing the embargo is nothing more than a fully exposed attempt to make more narrow-minded personal gains at the expense of other states, both those which have sustained great financial and economic damage due to the embargo, and those which have been deprived of commercial dealing with Iraq.

There remains one question: What is the secret behind Albright's enthusiasm and pursuit of this criminal and reckless behavior?

There are many explanations for it. But we support those who say that Albright is trying by her enthusiasm and impertinence to convince the White House that she qualifies for the post of U.S. secretary of state, especially since there are those who believe that Christopher is a weak and an unsuccessful secretary and that his replacement is possible and very imminent.

Ramadan Reiterates Stand on Kurdish Autonomy

JN1503203595 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the patronage of leader President Saddam Husayn, the affiliates of the Legislative Council and Executive Council of the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan held a major speech rally, marking the 25th anniversary of the historic 11 March statement.

The leader president deputized Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan to attend the rally on his behalf. Taha Yasin Ramadan delivered a speech on the occasion. He began by relaying the greetings of leader President Saddam Husayn to the attendees, as well as his wishes of continued success to them.

Ramadan added: This time 25 years ago, the glorious 17-30 July revolution made a significant national gain;

namely, the issuance of the historic 11 March statement to resolve the Kurdish question peacefully and democratically in order to lay down broad-based and strong foundations for national unity between the Arabs and Kurds of Iraq and uphold the principles cherished by the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and the [words indistinct] of the glorious 17-30 July revolution. This statement also reflected the revolution's true and genuine belief that ethnic groups must obtain their legitimate rights within the context of a strong and united Iraq in terms of territory and people.

The vice president went on to say: The autonomous region experienced true tranquility and peace thanks to the accomplishments made and the laws enacted. Consequently, our Kurdish people enjoyed security and national unity and regained their legitimate national rights. Additionally, all Kurds took part in the construction endeavor, and the Kurdish region saw a large-scale construction campaign, as well as various strategic development projects in the economic, service, and educational fields.

Our Kurdish people rallied behind the great leader Saddam Husayn, who granted them their rights as Kurds and Iraqis. Thus, the Iraqi leadership stood as a leadership that made pioneering decisions in this regard. Moreover, Iraqi Kurds were given preferential treatment denied Syrian, Turkish, Iranian, and Soviet Kurds, who have continued to suffer from oppression and deprivation. For, the latter have not thus far regained their most basic legitimate rights. That is why the sons of our Kurdish people served as honest guardians and courageous defenders of great Iraq in the glorious Saddam's al-Qadisiyah battle [the war with Iran], regardless of whether they served within the ranks of the Armed Forces or within the ranks of the Popular Army. Throughout the years of the war, they remained an impregnable bulwark in the face of the Iranian aggressors. During all immortal battles, our Kurdish people took honorable stands. They held out in the face of the (?ferocious) 30-state aggression.

Ramadan said: Despite the tons of bombs and missiles dropped by the aggressors on their installations, schools, (?buildings), and mosques, the 30-state coalition failed to undermine this great Iraqi cohesion. That is why the aggressors launched the chapter of treason and treachery. They prepared petty agents to spearhead this chapter. The reference here is to the agents who inherited agentry and treason from their fathers, the arch-agents. These petty agents attempted to mislead our Kurdish people with slogans that have proven to be false.

In his speech, Taha Yasin Ramadan added: The day will come when our beloved northern Iraq will be purged of the filth of the occupiers. Then, our Kurdish people will tear apart all the slogans promoted by the heads of Kurdish agent gangs, who have continued to implement all the orders issued to them by their U.S. masters and their intelligence men, who are stationed in our beloved northern Iraq, as happened when these gangs attacked units of our great army to create an excuse that the United States could use to extend the sanctions clamped on our steadfast Iraq. All the tactics grounded in deception, misrepresentation of facts, and posturing will be short lived regardless of how long they last. Soon, our beloved northern Iraq will return to the motherland and the big tent. Then, national unity will be regained, and the ordeal plaguing our Kurdish people will be reversed. Then, agentry, treason, and subservience will be defeated so that Iraq may emerge united in terms of territory and people, as it has always been, and so that all Iraqis may enjoy the benefits of the wise leadership of Saddam Husayn, the unifying figure, may God protect him.

Then, Baha'-al-Din Ahmad, chairman of the Legislative Council of the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan, delivered a speech, saying: While marking such national and pan-Arab occasions, we recall with a great deal of pride and affection the role played by leader mujahid President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, in addressing the Kurdish issue, which continued to revolve in a vicious circle until it was addressed by the leader, who came up with a peaceful and democratic solution epitomized by the 11 March statement and the implementation of the Autonomy Rule Law.

Baha'-al-Din Ahmad added: Our Kurdish population will not condone for long the oppression meted out against them by those who are capitalizing on their misery, interests, and resources. They will rise up to lead a secure life under the revolution and the 11 March statement and leader mujahid President Saddam Husayn, who is capable of bringing all Iraqis together.

The rally was attended by National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih; comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, secretary general of the National Progressive and Patriotic Front; and several cabinet members and state and party officials.

KDP's Barzani Denies Negotiations With Baghdad

JN1503180095 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 13 Mar 95 pp 15-16

[Interview with KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani by Zaki Shihab in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Shihab] For some time, battles have been raging with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK]. Is there a way to stop this bleeding?

[Barzani] Yes, fighting can be ended through the withdrawal of the PUK fighters who occupied the provincial capital, Irbil. The occupation of Irbil has resulted in the fragmentation of the regional government, the paralysis of the parliament, and the disruption of public life in the city and elsewhere. The result has been grave. Undoubtedly, the unconditional withdrawal of the PUK forces from the capital, Irbil, will pave the way for the cessation of fighting and resolving other problems.

[Shihab] After the fall of hundreds of dead and thousands of wounded, is there any chance of working as one team within the government of the Kurdistan region?

[Barzani] The Kurdish people elected their parliament in a fair and democratic elections in May 1992. The parliament's term will not end before late May 1995. If fighting ceases, the situation proceeds toward normalization, and a positive atmosphere prevails, then the parliament—we think—will be able to form a regional government to run the affairs of the region. The parliament is the only authorized, legitimate authority. No one has the right to disrupt its activity. The parliament can form a government.

[Shihab] You have been exchanging charges about what has actually led to the fighting. What actually happened? Does it go beyond customs revenues and things like that?

[Barzani] The real conflict in Kurdistan is over an authority that has not been entrenched yet. As you know, the formation of the parliament and government in the region is based on a 50-50 split between the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] and the PUK. Other parties were also supposed to take part in the government. Any parliamentary or government composition made up in accordance with this formula will remain unstable and will result in daily problems. When complicated problems surfaced at the end of 1993 and early 1994, we suggested that the solution could be holding elections as scheduled (late May 1995) or maybe before the end of the parliamentary term, if that would resolve the problems. However, as the date for elections comes closer, the PUK further complicates the situation. They have even explicitly told us that they want elections. However, they resorted to force to change the balance of political power in the region. They failed in the first round of this coup attempt, which started in early May 1994 and ended on 25 August 1994, when they suffered a major military defeat at the Halabjah-al-Sulaymaniyah axis. Therefore, they were forced to stop fighting. On 20 December 1994, the PUK resumed its military coup with the aim of changing the balance of political power and preventing the holding of elections as scheduled. They launched surprise attacks on eight of our party headquarters and centers in the Karkuk, al-Sulaymaniyah, and Irbil Governorates. Moreover, they occupied the capital of Irbil militarily. Oblivious to the fact that our people live under international protection and that we have no independent state, they chased and killed members of our party and looted their property.

Prime Minister Kusret Rasul, who is from the PUK, took part in looting of the houses of his KDP government colleagues. He also looted the houses of members of parliament and other social personalities. Therefore, nothing was left for us except to struggle to foil this military coup and to restore the legitimacy that our people have achieved through the election of a parliament and the formation of a government accountable to the parliament.

[Shihab] What about the customs revenues?

[Barzani] This issue is being exploited to conceal the reasons for the conflict. We did not and we will not block the dispatch of any revenues to the region's government, which must view them as the property of all the people. These revenues should serve the people rather than a party, a faction, or a person.

[Shihab] You have imposed a siege on Irbil and other areas. What are your conditions for lifting that siege?

[Barzani] After the PUK forces occupied the city of Irbil, our forces were obliged to impose a strict military cordon on the city to tighten the grip around the coupists and to prevent them from spreading to other areas. As a result, trade activity was disturbed for a very short time, after which we were able to resume normal trading inside and outside the city. There is no economic siege on Irbil or al-Sulaymaniyah. Anyone visiting Kurdistan can see that for himself. In fact, we have not imposed any siege on Irbil. Yet, the PUK is trying to shed light on some economic problems created by its military operations and to distract attention from its military coup attempt.

[Shihab] Do you not fear that the fighting may turn into a civil war?

[Barzani] The current fighting is not a civil war, although the PUK leadership is trying to portray it as a civil war. The fighting would have been avoided if the PUK had abided by its agreements, under which it pledged to solve problems through dialogue and to hold elections. As we have previously said, the current conflict is over power. The PUK leadership is annoying our people by using certain ways to justify its thirst for power, such as exploiting local dialects, areas, and even divisionist attempts. Even the enemies of the Kurds have not used such means to achieve their goals. Our people in general are against this internecine fighting, but they are being oppressed in many areas. However, we will do our utmost not to turn this fighting into a civil war.

[Shihab] How do you view the role of the Unified Iraqi National Congress, and do you think it is capable of playing a role in ending the crisis?

[Barzani] As you know, the Unified Iraqi National Congress includes many Iraqi opposition forces. It is also a starting point for the opponents who are working inside the country, particularly those pursued by the regime. We believe that the congress will mediate because it is in its interest to achieve peace in Kurdistan and because it is neutral and objective in general.

[Shihab] Several U.S. and Turkish envoys have visited northern Iraq. Reports have been circulated to the effect that warnings and threats have been communicated to Kurdish parties regarding the dangers posed to the continuation of the Western protection of your region by the ongoing fighting? How true are these reports?

[Barzani] The international protection provided for the Kurdish people is meant to protect them from the Iraqi regime. But, when Kurdish parties are engaged in infighting, this will reflect negatively on the media coverage of the situation in the Kurdish region. This could also influence public opinion, the Congress, and parliaments. This would embarrass the governments that have sent troops to protect Kurds from the Iraqi regime—not to protect one Kurdish party from another.

Undoubtedly, continued infighting will raise objections to the continued provision of protection. The interests of some international parties are best served by revoking the sanctions clamped on the Iraqi regime. This will ultimately influence the continuation of the protection provided. In the same vein, the interests of other international parties are best served by maintaining the sanctions. As for the interests of the Kurdish people, they are best served by ending the infighting, halting the aggression, and establishing peace on the basis of justice and legitimacy.

[Shihab] Some humanitarian organizations have threatened to withdraw from the region if the infighting continues. Are you not aware of the dangers posed by the specter of starvation? Are you not afraid of a migration similar to that which took place during the Gulf war?

[Barzani] The fighting has not constituted a serious impediment obstructing the work of humanitarian organizations, which are conducting their activities normally. We have a great deal of respect and appreciation for them and for their employees. We do not expect migrations similar to that which took place during the 1991 Gulf war.

[Shihab] How true are the reports circulating about the existence of abnormal activity by Iran and other neighboring countries in the regions under your control?

[Barzani] None of the countries of the region is engaged in abnormal activity in Iraqi Kurdistan. Nonetheless, if the fighting continues and expands, there will be a greater likelihood that the Iraqi regime and countries of the region will interfere in the Kurdish region's internal affairs. This places additional responsibilities on the Kurdish leaders' shoulders. This is a reminder that the Kurdish leaders must put their house in order.

[Shihab] Why have you failed to respond favorably to a Turkish call for a meeting with Jalal Talabani in Ankara? Is there a plan for you to meet him soon?

[Barzani] I have not turned down any Turkish call in this regard. Nonetheless, I do not believe that Jalal Talabani's plans against our strongholds and troops have ended. When the PUK's determination to launch attacks against our troops' positions subsides, there will be a greater likelihood for ending the fighting and achieving peace.

[Shihab] During his recent visit to Turkey, the Iraqi foreign minister spoke of continuous contacts with your party. How true are these statements?

[Barzani] There are no negotiations or dialogue between our party and the Iraqi regime. The reports circulated to this effect were not attributed to any official. They were merely press reports. As far as the issue of contacts is concerned, I would like to say that there are several independent Kurdish figures living in Baghdad. These figures might have met with Iraqi officials before they visited Kurdistan. During visits to Kurdistan and prior to their departure for Baghdad, these figures might also have met with officials of our party, or of other parties. However, I would like to say that the Talabani-led PUK has continued to receive weapons and ammunition, and ammunition in particular, from the Iraqi regime. The PUK is using these weapons and ammunition in the fighting against our party. This activity has increased recently. This aid is being extended via the contact lines of Kifri, Chamchamal, al-Kuwayr, and Irbil.

[Shihab] Do you believe that Baghdad is still qualified to mediate the conflict between warring Kurdish parties?

[Barzani] As I have told you, our position in this regard is clear. Meanwhile, Jalal Talabani has reacted to the Iraqi regime's offer to mediate the conflict between the warring Kurdish factions by saying that he will "consider the offer." He has not thus far revealed the outcome of his consideration of the offer.

Calls Recent Events 'Theatrics'

JN1503194895 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1703 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Salah al-Din Summer Resort—To shed light on the distorted reports about recent events in Kurdistan, brother struggler Mas'ud Barzani, the leader of our party [Kurdistan Democratic Party] received in his private headquarters at 1600 on 15 March a delegation from the Assyrian Democratic Movement. The meeting was attended by brother Samir 'Abd-al-Rahman and Dr. Roz Nuri Shawiz, members of our party's Political Bureau; and brothers (Franso Hariri), ('Abdallah Agrin), and (Nizam al-Din Qilish), members of the party's Central Committee. The movement's delegation comprised (Ninos), Ya'qub, (Shama'il), Mikha'il, and Dr. William.

After welcoming the friendly delegation, a meeting was convened. Brother Mas'ud Barzani discussed in detail the reality of the recent events in Kurdistan and the unconvincing allegations made concerning them. He said that these theatrics had nothing to do with reality. Rather, it was meant only to deceive the Kurdistan political and nationalist parties. Unfortunately, he said, such practices led to negative consequences. The allegations, he said, were intended to enable those who took part in the events to find a way out of the impasse.

Brother Barzani stressed that our party, with its long history, has not and will never agree to jeopardize the lives of the Kurdish people and their gains to attain limited party interests.

During the meeting, Sami 'Abd-al-Rahman explained some aspects of that play.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting.

Defense Minister's Motorcade Comes Under Fire in Karkuk

NC1503172295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1505 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In its issue published today [15 March], the newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY says that at 1000 on 12 March, as criminal 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, the regime's war minister, was driving in a motorcade in the streets of Karkuk, one of the soldiers detailed to guard the streets and the buildings opened fire at the motorcade, hitting a protection car and killing a number of bodyguards.

Following the incident, large numbers of Iraqi Army forces cordoned off the area near Baghdad Garage, arrested some citizens, and stormed houses.

Government Forces Reportedly Shell Southern Villages

NC1503155795 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] After the regime of tyrant Saddam reinforced his forces and heavy weapons in southern Iraq, especially in the marshland region, units from these forces launched brutal attacks on villages and residential areas in al-Majarr district and al-Musharrah subdistrict in al-'Amarah Governorate in the past few days. Our sources inside Iraq said the regime forces used all types of large- and medium-caliber weapons. Several armored units were also involved.

The sources said the attacks were also accompanied by evacuating residents, who were forced to leave their villages after they were destroyed and burned. They said that scores of families who were forced to leave their houses in the marshland were gathered in special areas [words indistinct] and then transferred to unknown destinations.

PUK, UINC Adopt Measures To Repulse Attacks

NC1503172095 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1505 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation from the Political Bureau of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] made up of Dr. Fu'ad Ma'sum, Kusrat Rasul 'Ali, and Dr. Kamal Fu'ad met yesterday with his eminence Shaykh Muhammad Bahr al-'Ulum, member of the Presidential Council of the Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC]; Dr. Ahmad al-Shalabi, chairman of the UINC Executive Council; and Staff Lieutenant General Wafiq al-Samarra'i.

During the two-hour meeting, attended by Najad Ahmad 'Aziz, deputy speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament, and Sa'di Ahmad Sira, the conferees discussed the current situation in Iraq and adopted the necessary measures to repulse any attacks by the Baghdad regime against the liberated areas in Kurdistan. The conferees agreed to hold further meetings.

PUK Forces Reportedly Capture 76 Soldiers

NC1503165395 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1518 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. "And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take." [Koranic verse] Verily, God has spoken the truth.

Ladies and gentlemen. O hero peshmergas in the trenches of defense and honor. O freemen in Iraq wherever you are. The heroes of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] have recorded a new epic added to their other epics in pounding the strongholds of the dictatorship and teaching its aggressive forces stationed on the borders of liberated Kurdistan lessons in resistance and lightning attacks. We have warned the dictatorial, fascist clique in Baghdad against the consequences of concentrating its remnant forces and attacking and shelling populated areas. We have repeatedly told these murderers that the peshmergas of Kurdistan—the soldiers of the PUK and the men of difficult tasks—will always lie in wait for them.

Kurdistan, with its mountains, valleys, and plains, has become an inferno incinerating the feet of the tyrant invaders. Kurdistani heroes are teaching the dictatorship lessons in revolution and resistance and are pounding its strongholds one after the other.

After renegade dictator Saddam Husayn concentrated his army, backed by tanks, armored vehicles, helicopters, and artillery guns, to reattack and reoccupy the sacred land of Kurdistan and after the Kurdistan peshmerga forces and the Iraqi opposition forces gathered to strike this army with an iron fist and pound the dens of crime, the heroic Kurdistani peshmerga recorded this new epic.

At 2300 on the night of 14/15 March and to abort the dictatorial regime's plans to attack Kurdistan, a heroic force from the PUK peshmergas launched a lightning and surprise attack on the Iraqi regime's forces in the headquarters of the 1st Regiment of the 130th Brigade in (Qushtaba al-Tulkukri) in Irbil Governorate, inflicting on the enemy huge losses in life and equipment. Our heroic forces completely controlled the regiment's headquarters, captured a large number of enemy personnel, including a number of officers, and seized many weapons and equipment as follows:

—Control of the headquarters of the 1st Regiment of the 130th Brigade

—Control of six companies, including a commando company

—Control of 24 bunkers
—Seizure of four 120-mm mortar and six 82-mm mortar guns
—Seizure of one RPJ-9 launcher and three Dimitrov 14.5 mm machine guns
—Seizure of hundreds of Kalashnikov rifles and RPG launchers
—Death of scores of enemy personnel who resisted and refused to surrender

A large number of soldiers and officers also surrendered to the heroic peshmerga forces. They so far number 76 soldiers and officers, including Staff Major 'Abd-al-Husayn Mawla Salman, commander of the 1st Regiment of the 130th Brigade; Captain Dia' Jasim Muhammad from Baghdad and Capt Muhammad Lam'i Ibrahim from Karkuk; First Lieutenant 'Abd-al-Khalaf Hammud Jubur from (Shirbat) and 1st Lt Ibrahim 'Ali Taha from Sinjar.

The PUK forces seized a military vehicle, two jeeps, two electric generators, one radio set, two night telescopes, one typewriter, and other military equipment. We lost one hero peshmerga who sacrificed his soul in defense of Kurdistan and its dignity.

Blessed are your fists and may your victory be permanent, O heroes of Kurdistan. March forward. Victory is yours and defeat and shame for the 'Alfaqist butchers. Victory comes from God. Verily, God has spoken the truth.

MIO Supervisor Inaugurates Telecommunications Tower

JN1203162695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1330 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—In Baghdad today, Staff General Husayn Kamil Hasan, minister of industry and minerals and supervisor of the Military Industrialization Organization [MIO], inaugurated the Saddam Tower, which is considered a giant cultural monument. The tower was built by the MIO's mujahidin, despite the continued unjust blockade.

A large celebration was held at the tower's site. Engineer Ahmad Isma'il Majid, director general of the al-Faw State Enterprise, which has carried out the project, delivered a speech. He pointed out that the Saddam Tower, which is 203 and one-half meters high, is considered the first project of its kind in Iraq.

He said the tower consists of two concrete sections 120 meters high. This is topped by an iron structure, which is 203 and one-half meters high and which is based on 36 reinforced concrete foundations, which are 40-42 meters deep. On top of this, a revolving dome with a diameter of 31 meters is installed. The tower's base is surrounded by a two-story building housing the main entrance, an internal terrace, and a spiral staircase on both sides. This reflects the distinguished Iraqi architecture known for its high-quality finishings.

The bridge of the tower consists of a reinforced concrete sliding form cylinder, which was implemented by purely Iraqi cadres and which reflects distinguished work and the spirit of perseverance and creativity that are clearly displayed every day.

The tower also consists of three telecommunications platforms, each with an area of 114 square meters, connected to the body of the concrete tower at the heights of 72, 82, and 92 meters. Aerial discs will be installed on these platforms in the future to secure better services for long-range telephone calls in all directions between the 102 and 107 meter levels.

The first floor of the glass dome was designed as a cafeteria with a 60-person capacity. The second floor is a revolving restaurant, operated by a system of electrical motors and wheels designed to make a full revolution at various speeds, from one revolution per 30 minutes to one revolution per 120 minutes. The revolving restaurant has a capacity of 150 persons. The 203.5-meter high steel tower is made of a conical steel cylinder with a diameter of 2.5 meter at the base to 1.0 meter at the top. It will be used for communications and to boost television transmission.

In his speech, the al-Faw Public Enterprise director general said 1,026 tonnes of steel were used to reinforce the structures of the tower and that 5,950 cubic meters of concrete were cast.

He noted there were several cases in which the mujahidin displayed distinguished ingenuity. They provided extra techniques to cast the concrete up to 120 meters high for the first time in Iraq by using fixed concrete pumps. They converted special cranes to execute more than five vertical activities simultaneously. They also trained a special staff to assemble and build the steel structure and the glass dome structure, and to fix glass to the glass dome from the outside, at great heights and in harsh weather conditions. They also designed and manufactured an integrated system for the revolving restaurant for the first time in the country.

More than 1,000 girls and boys from Iraqi schools and kindergartens performed to mark the opening of this great achievement.

The festival marking the opening of the tower included the burning of colored smoke canisters fired from the tower's high platforms. These canisters were manufactured for the first time in Iraq by the mujahidin of military industrialization in al-Qa'qa' Public Enterprise.

The event was covered by accredited correspondents of news agencies, television networks, and Arab and foreign press based in Baghdad.

Prison Inmates, Kuwaitis, Reportedly Executed in Jan

NC1203154695 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to Iraqi newspaper reports, the tyrant Saddam's regime issued orders in January 1995 to execute 40 detainees in Baghdad's al-Radwaniyah jail.

The opposition newspaper NIDA' AL-RAFIDAYN cites exclusive sources as saying that among the 40 victims were 10 Kuwaiti nationals held by the despot Saddam's authorities.

It should be noted here that Saddam's regime insists on denying that it is holding any Kuwaiti POW's or hostages in its fearsome detention centers even though reports from other sources prove the opposite.

Farmers Warned Over Failure To Deliver Cereals

JN1203124095 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1029 GMT 12 Mar 95

[Announcement by the Ministry of Agriculture; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In accordance with a decision made by the Council of Ministers in the session it held on 18 February 1995 regarding the failure of some peasants and farmers to market all or part of their pledged cereal produce, be it wheat or barley, to the state, the following has been decided:

First, written warnings shall be addressed to the below-named peasants and farmers, who have failed to market their produce and have a marketing deficit of 10 tonnes or more. They shall be fined half the deficit value of the cereals they were obliged to market on the basis of the prevailing market price when cereals were due to have been marketed. If the violation is repeated in the next season, punishment will be more severe. Land could be confiscated from contractors. [passage omitted]

Second, a written forewarning shall be addressed to violators who have a marketing deficit of 1-10 tonnes. If the violation is repeated in the next season, they will be sent written warnings, and measures will be taken against them in accordance with the laws and regulations in force.

Third, it is to be recalled that the competent agencies have recommended that the land of violators be confiscated, and that they be imprisoned. The Council of Ministers has, however, decided to grant them a last opportunity to serve their community in the current embargo circumstances.

Rabin: U.S. Team To Be 'Mere Mediator' in Future

TA1503172295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister says it will take another week or two before the talks with Syria are resumed through the two countries' ambassadors in Washington. He revealed that Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' had worked very hard to persuade President al-Asad to accept the formulas drafted by the Americans, but that he eventually did.

The prime minister added that the U.S. peace team, which is due to return to Israel in about two weeks, will not raise any proposals of its own in future negotiations and that contrary to reports, it will remain a mere mediator.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Mr. Rabin made these remarks in a meeting of Labor ministers.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1600 GMT on 15 March adds: "Minister Yosi Sarid said today that the security arrangements with Syria can be reciprocal, but not equal. Parity did not exist even in the security arrangements with Egypt, although there was reciprocal demilitarization and troop reduction. The Egyptians understood it, and the Syrians should adopt a similar attitude, he said."]

'Political Sources' Say Christopher Mission 'Failed'

TA1603115995 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 16 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Moti Bassok and Drora Perl]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad told U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during their meeting in Damascus two days ago that he is interested in attaining a peace agreement with Israel in the next few months. This was said yesterday by a reliable American source.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin told Labor ministers that the Israel-Syria ambassador talks will resume in Washington in one or two weeks.

Political sources in Jerusalem yesterday assessed that Christopher has failed in his eighth Middle East visit and that the ambassador talks in Washington will fail to extricate the negotiations from the stalemate. One of the ministers asked Rabin whether Christopher achieved a breakthrough, to which Rabin replied: "Everything is relative."

The political sources believe that only a dramatic change in Syria's or Israel's positions will revive the Israeli-Syrian negotiations in Washington. The resumption of the ambassador talks in Washington without an agenda for dealing with substantial issues will cause Ambassadors al-Mu'allim and Rabinovich to tread water, as was the case in the past, and to embark on lengthy discussions about the resumption of the officers' talks in Washington.

After an agreement is achieved on this issue, Dennis Ross, the head of the U.S. peace team, will visit Jerusalem and Damascus. According to the American plan, the chief of staff talks will then resume in Washington, at which point Israel and Syria will find themselves precisely where they were last December, when Ehud Baraq and Hikmat al-Shihabi discussed the Golan Heights security arrangements.

Rabin briefed Labor ministers about Christopher's talks in Damascus and Jerusalem. He noted that the issue of normalization was not raised in the talks, which focused on the security arrangements issue. The Syrians refused to discuss reciprocity, rather demanded to discuss equality. According to Rabin, it is impossible to discuss equality when we take into consideration the different geographic conditions of Israel and Syria.

Syria is demanding more of Israel than what Egypt had received in the peace agreements. The Americans did not bring their own proposals. Rabin claims that this is not included in their mandate, but that their role is to relay messages between the sides and to persuade them. Rabin noted that the only ones to show optimism this week were the Americans, whereas Israel and Syria showed restraint and a pragmatic and realistic approach.

Syrian Peace Seen as Vital for New Strategic Status

TA1503155095 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 15 Mar 95 p B1

[Commentary by Tzvi Bar'el: "What the Letter of Credit Will Say"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The attempt to translate Warren Christopher's body language reveals that he is mute. He does not smile or blink, his voice is as monotonous as a straight line produced by an electrocardiograph, and his suit hardly moves when he talks. Yet with al-Asad, he laughed. He laughed so hard that he had to tilt his head backward. Four hours later, he emerged encouraged from "a very positive meeting" in which a date for another meeting was set even before he had talked to Rabin.

Yet the attempt to find out what Christopher achieved in Damascus may be disappointing. Al-Asad gave no more than he had on the previous occasion: He agreed to resume the talks. He did not cede his stands—he demands full withdrawal, or at least an Israeli declaration of readiness for a full withdrawal from the entire Golan Heights—and he will give nothing for free or on credit.

Al-Asad is launching the new series of discussions from a powerful position. His alliance with Egypt needs no official announcement. Saudi Arabia sent its foreign minister for consultations in Damascus prior to Christopher's visit to Jeddah. Heads of Gulf states sent al-Asad and the Lebanese president their congratulations and messages of encouragement on the Day of South Lebanon which was marked yesterday. Lebanese Christian opposition attempts to drive Syria out are pathetic, and the Syrian-Lebanese bloc is a political fait accompli. Al-Asad, who is waiting to receive the Golan Heights, has become a man giving Israel a chance to give him the Heights.

Al-Asad speaks neither about American aid nor normalization. Syria needs money, or at least a rescheduling of its $20-billion debt, but al-Asad is not a man to beg to the U.S. Congress for credit or loan guarantees. He gives the U.S. mediators no ammunition to pressure him with. He does not have a shopping list to present to the United States, and if he ever writes one, he will again let the U.S. Administration feel he is doing it a favor by purchasing its weapons and wheat.

As far as al-Asad is concerned, there is no hurry. He is not participating in a contest on who will make peace with Israel first, and he is not worried about the date of the Israeli elections. If Rabin wants peace with Syria, the onus of proof is on him. In his view, he, al-Asad, has already done his share by announcing that he wants peace and that he is willing to pay the price.

One could say that Israel is in no hurry either. Syria and Israel are at war on paper only. The Lebanese front, despite the fatalities and the casualties, is not unbearable. Ceding the Golan Heights is a very high price in security and political terms, and it may be fatal to the Labor Party. At the same time, there are some people who still toy with the idea that one day Lebanon will disengage from Syria and make unilateral peace with Israel in exchange for full withdrawal, and that perhaps this option is worth waiting for.

Yet peace is not a ledger in which the two sides' profit and loss columns are totalled up. Israel is aspiring to acquire a new standing in the Middle East, a standing of a country that is the enemy of no Arab state. Signing a peace treaty with Jordan, or even solving the Palestinian issue is therefore not enough. Even peace with Egypt has not granted Israel an entry permit into the Middle East club. On the Israeli issue, the Arab countries are linked in a column, and whenever one link is severed, the entire sequence is undermined. Economic cooperation is not the problem; the problem lies in a security redefinition for Israel. A nonenemy state is one that can develop and grow even if it is unable to give up its strong, big army all at once. To achieve this strategic status, Israel needs peace with Syria.

Those who define time as an independent factor and seek to determine in whose favor it acts are liable to be left with a lot of worthless time on their hands. Therefore, if an opportunity for resuming the negotiations with the Syrians arises, Yitzhaq Rabin will have to treat al-Asad as Begin treated al-Sadat, and not as he treats 'Arafat. He, rather than al-Asad, should spell out the Heights' final state and the nature of the relations he strives to attain with Syria. Al-Asad is ready to give credence to an Israeli declaration of its readiness to withdraw from the entire Heights, and he attaches no trial-period condition, as Rabin has tried to do. This is the letter of credit for which al-Asad is waiting at present, and only that will allow pragmatic negotiations with Syria on matters of importance for the State of Israel to be launched. Without that, we will continue hosting an aging U.S. peace team.

Sources Say PA on 'Verge of Financial Collapse'

TA1003193695 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] is on the verge of financial collapse. This was stated by senior political sources in Jerusalem this evening. At a meeting with Warren Christopher today, 'Arafat indeed had grave complaints about the donor countries that do not keep their promise of funneling money to the PA. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen adds that the arrangement whereby the donor countries transfer funds to the PA will expire at the end of the month, and according to reports reaching Jerusalem, these countries do not intend to renew the arrangement.

Russian Foreign Minister To Pay Official Visit

TA1503190495 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Mar 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev is to arrive in Israel on an official visit at the end of March to discuss bilateral relations.

Our political affairs correspondent Shlomo Ganor reports that Eytan Bentzur, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry, will leave tomorrow for Moscow within the framework of the periodic consultations between the Israeli and Russian Foreign Ministries and to brief the Russian side on recent developments in the peace efforts.

Businessmen, IDF Officers Smuggling Russian Red Mercury

TA1003193895 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Report by Hanan 'Azran; all place and personal names as transliterated]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli businessmen, including senior reserve IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers, have been involved in attempts to smuggle a chemical substance used in the missile industry out of Russia and into countries that are developing nuclear weapons, our correspondent Hanan 'Azran reports from the studio.

Two men participated in the meeting at Geneva's Cornavin Hotel. One of them was a Frenchman named Jean Louis Barku, who generally trades in gold, while the second man was an Israeli, a senior reserve officer in the IDF. The two men discussed the sale of red mercury; this is the code name for a chemical substance used among other things in the missile industry. The Israeli sought to have the material examined at a Geneva laboratory to determine its purity. The Frenchman first demanded $100,000 as a down payment, and the deal ultimately fell through. However, on another occasion at the Aspelanda Hotel in Berlin, a German businessmen known for his connections inside the former Communist bloc met with another Israeli. The German proposed to get the Israeli defense establishment interested in the strategic material called red mercury. In order to obscure the shipment's destination, the German offered Israel his company's services in obtaining false names for what is professionally known as the end user [last two words in English]. Here are some documents exchanged by the parties involved in the red mercury deals. In the documents, the parties are requested to confirm the substance's purity and transfer money to various bank accounts. The documents highlight the Israeli presence. The documents report that a representative of an Israeli company, Oceania, which also operates in Bonn, is negotiating a red mercury deal. Red mercury has caught the imagination of Israelis working in this gray market, not because of its color, but because of the huge profits one can amass in a single transaction. One gram of this substance goes for $300. Every lead bottle of red mercury weighs 34 kg. The scope of each deal reaches $10 million.

In the years following the collapse of the USSR there has been growing interest in these strategic materials. Whether it is red mercury, heavy water, uranium, or plutonium, the stuff is being smuggled out of Russia and sold on the black market. New immigrants formerly employed by the Russian weapons industry brought information about the value of these strategic materials to Israel. The materials are generally stolen from secret Russian army bases or from natural reservoirs. It is only possible to gain access to these locations through inside information from inside the army, which is bought for a great deal of money. In the past, such information reached another Israeli citizen, a factory owner from central Israel, who told me, perhaps in order to minimize his involvement in the affair, that it was the American intelligence services who were spreading the information in order to trap Russian military personnel who were selling the strategic materials. For this reason, all contact was cut off with an individual known as Piotr Bohal, a resident of Zurich, after he was suspected by his gray market cronies of working with the CIA. The material was ultimately offered to the Israeli defense industries, but a senior source warned the Israeli, who at the time planned to purchase the red mercury on behalf of the local defense industries, that this was a dangerous affair Israel had no interest in becoming involved in.

Beilin Returns From Meeting in Jordan

TA1603102595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Yosi Beilin returned this morning from Jordan, where he traveled yesterday afternoon for a meeting with the Jordanian foreign minister. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports the two dealt with political developments in the wake of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent shuttle mission. They also discussed the Amman conference, which will be convened in the next few weeks as a continuation of the Casablanca conference. Another issue discussed by the two was the United States' decision to write off Jordanian debts. It was estimated that following this decision, European countries and Japan would start investing funds in Jordan.

Likud, Labor Discuss Possible Unity Government

TA1103141795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Senior Labor Party and Likud officials recently started discussing the possibility of establishing a national unity government. A senior Labor Party source told our correspondent Yo'el Nir that so far only initial contacts have been held.

According to the proposal, an attempt will be made to find a formula that permits the continuation of the negotiations with the Palestinians and the Syrians and that will also be acceptable to the Likud. The Labor Party source noted that certain Likud officials believe there is room for the establishment of a national unity government despite Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu's opposition to such a step.

House Members on Christopher Remarks on Debt Issue

JN1503133795 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 15 Mar 95 p 28

[Report by Nayif al-Muhaysin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dr. Hashim al-Dabbas, chairman of the House of Representatives Financial Committee, has said that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's statements on 13 March on the cancellation of Jordan's debts to the United States clearly indicates that the U.S. Administration abides by its previous promises to Jordan on canceling these debts.

Al-Dabbas said this commitment confirms Jordan's legitimate right to the cancellation of these debts. He said he hopes the U.S. Congress, with its House of Representatives and Senate, will carry this out as soon as possible or within the time limit set by the U.S. Administration.

He said: We not only hope that the U.S. Administration and Congress will cancel Jordan's debts but also that they will do their best with other creditor countries like Germany, France, Japan, and others to have them cancel the debts Jordan owes them.

Dr. al-Dabbas said Jordan accrued these large debts because it was on the longest defense line with Israel, which forced it to borrow money to defend itself.

On the committee's meeting with the finance minister on 13 March, al-Dabbas said the finance minister is optimistic that the United States will cancel all of Jordan's debts and that all indications show that there is a positive response by the U.S. Administration, which persistently seeks to cancel these debts. [passage omitted]

On the other hand, Munir Subar, rapporteur of the House of Representatives Financial Committee, said that the committee welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's statements on the U.S. Administration's abidance by the promises it had made to Jordanian officials on the cancellation of Jordan's debts to the United States and on increasing development and security assistance to it.

He added that the financial committee is closely following the efforts the U.S. Administration under President Bill Clinton exerts with the U.S. Congress to carry out U.S. commitments and to translate U.S. concerns for Jordan's prosperity and security and for the success of the peace process.

Subar said the U.S. commitment to Jordan and the U.S. Secretary of State's reassurances make one hope that stability and calm will continue to prevail and that the peace process will continue. He said that the financial committee highly values His Majesty King Husayn's efforts, which are well received by the international community, to decrease Jordan's foreign debts and to perpetuate stability, security, and progress in our beloved homeland.

Paper Appreciates U.S. Pledges, Urges Implementation

JN1403135695 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 14 Mar 95 pp 1, 19

[Editorial: "Promises That Cannot Wait"]

[FBIS Translated Text] First of all, we hope that Mr. Warren Christopher will be able to move the peace process at least one step toward its ultimate goal. We are aware that hopes are one thing and working to realize them is something else. We hope also that the new tour of the U.S. secretary will lead to a move forward, because the time which is passing cannot be reversed. A real breakthrough has to be achieved or else the influential parties in the United States, Arab countries concerned with peace, and Israel would enter a stage of uncertainty that could substantially harm the entire peace process.

One thing we are certainly aware of is that Christopher heard from His Majesty King Husayn the same talk he heard previously. He was reassured by his majesty that Jordan is committed to peace and the just settlement. The king stressed to him that Jordan seeks to make the lives of people under peace more secure and brighter. It also wishes to make people more eager to preserve the fruits of peace. The only alternative to this is a suffering that will be more severe than that witnessed during the years of war, and serious despair that would breed extremism and violence and enable the enemies of peace to raise their voices and become more influential.

Jordan has not departed from its position on the cause of peace. It will maintain this position because it is aware that this noble goal deserves sacrifice and serious efforts. If others fail to show equal care and readiness to make peace the people's choice, goal, and vehicle to realize their aspirations of a dignified and secure life, one party—that is Jordan—cannot alone establish and protect peace.

We appreciate the many pledges we have received from the Americans. However, we, officials and citizens, cannot remain content with mere promises which we cannot use in fighting poverty, unemployment, extremism, and the suffering of people, resulting from wars, acts of aggression, and expansion over half a century. What is more important than Washington's appreciation of the important Jordanian role in the peace process is the need to prevent giving peace opponents in Jordan and Israel strong pretexts that would defeat the pretexts of those who view peace as a noble goal and a means to stave off horrors from our generations and region.

We would like to stress that waiting for one more day at this stage is as dangerous as waiting for many years. People cannot endure this any longer. Jordanians do not want to serve as a model of a people who are killed in times of war and whose bodies are mutilated—God forbid—in times of peace. We leave this up to the United States and all those concerned with the goal of peace in the world.

Beilin Briefs al-Kabariti on Christopher Talks

JN1603081295 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16-17 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Ayman al-Safadi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin arrived in Amman Wednesday [15 March] evening and met with Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti to brief him on the outcome of talks U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Prime Minister John Major held in Israel this week.

Informed sources said Mr. Beilin also briefed Mr. al-Kabariti on the progress acheived on the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process during Mr. Christopher's tour of the region.

Mr. Christopher announced in Damascus Tuesday that Syria and Israel will resume their direct talks on the Golan Heights in a few days with the participation of U.S. officials.

Jordanian officials Wednesday welcomed the resumption of the Israeli-Syrian talks which were cut in December last year.

Mr. al-Kabariti expressed "comfort" with the outcome of Mr. Christopher's talks in the region, especially "the limited breakthrough" that was acheived on the Syrian-Israeli track.

Mr. Christopher on Wednesday ended his 13th tour of the area after holding talks with Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian, Saudi and Israeli officials.

Mr. al-Kabariti said earlier he hoped that the Syrian-Israeli tracks would acheive progress leading to an Israeli withdrawal from Syrian and Lebanese occupied territories to the borders of pre-June 4, 1967.

Informed sources told the JORDAN TIMES that Mr. al-Kabariti stressed to Mr. Beilin the importance of the implementation of the provisions of the Oslo accord in the transitional period.

UK's Major Pledges To Maintain 'Program of Aid'

JN1503155795 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] British Prime Minister John Major has wound up an official visit to Jordan, his first since he assumed office in 1991.

During his two-day stay in the kingdom, the British prime minister held talks with his majesty the king, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, and Premier al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir. The discussions centered on bilateral relations, and international issues of mutual concern.

Premier Major and his accompanying delegation were seen off by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, cabinet members, senior civic and military officials.

Earlier this morning, the British prime minister voiced admiration of the way in which his majesty the king has seized the opportunity to peace in the Middle East. He said: In doing so, Jordan has made a commitment to a better and safer future for its people and others across the area.

Premier Major was speaking at a ceremony held at al-Hashimiyah Palace in suburban Amman, where he announced the donation of equipment worth more than $3 million to Jordan.

The British head of government also unveiled a number of awards and scholarships for Jordanian students in Britain.

In a speech on the occasion, Mr. Major said he is proud of the relationship existing between Amman and London for a long time, and recalled Jordan's assistance to Britain throughout the Second World War. He went on to say that during talks with his majesty last evening, he reaffirmed Britain's support to Jordan and to the course it has taken. The British official pledged to do whatever London can to help Amman financially and economically. He promised to try to maintain a program of aid, both bilaterally and through the European Union.

[Begin Major recording] Let me say that for our part, we stand ready to help wherever we can with Jordan. I am delighted that we were able to play a role in rescheduling debts—writing off some debts altogether—and we will continue to give a consistent support in the efforts of Jordan to reduce its indebtedness and improve the future of its economy. We will also seek to maintain our program of aid—both bilaterally and through the European Union—and we will do this for a number of reasons, not just because Jordan is an old and dear friend, but also because of what Jordan stands for; a country committed to democracy, a country that is meeting the challenges of development with very great skill and with very great courage, a country committed to tolerance and to moderation, and a country that understands, as well as any country, the importance of achieving real and lasting peace and stability in the region. [end recording]

Al-Kabariti Receives Iraqi Counterpart al-Sahhaf

JN1203180495 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti met his Iraqi counterpart Muhammad al-Sahhaf and discussed the UN Security Council's agenda. The Iraqi minister briefed Mr. al-Kabariti on the outcome of a just-concluded Gulf tour which took him to Qatar and Oman. Mr. al-Kabariti stressed the need to rally for the lifting of the suffering of the people of Iraq in Arab and international forums.

General Strike, Marches Staged for South

NC1403140795 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1230 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the Day of Solidarity With the South and Western al-Biqa', a general strike was observed throughout Lebanon today. Public and private establishments, including banks, schools, universities, and shops in Beirut and all Lebanese cities and villages, closed their doors. Traffic was paralyzed and thousands of people sported yellow ribbons with the words Resolution 425 on their chests to show that they join the call for implementing the international resolution.

Traffic throughout Lebanon came to a halt for three minutes at 1200 sharp; news media broadcast the national anthem; church bells rang, and mosque loudspeakers called out God is Great as an expression of the Lebanese people's solidarity with the south and western al-Biqa'. The Middle East Airlines [MEA] stopped its flights for 30 minutes at noon, and stickers were pasted on all the company's planes calling on the world to remember Resolution 425. MEA staff stopped work all day today.

Marchers roamed the street of the capital, raising Lebanese flags and placards saluting the steadfastness of the sons of the south and western al-Biqa' and stressing the need to implement Resolution 425. Trade Unions, social organizations, labor and representative associations, and health establishments in the south sent a series of petitions and cables to the Council of Minister's session, which is still under way at the government offices in al-Nabatiyah. They urged the government to support health centers in the south, especially government hospitals and clinics.

In al-Nabatiyah, public and private establishments, businesses, and private and government schools suspended their activities today. A celebration was held in the grounds of the prison in the town of Ansar, and lawyers of the south staged a silent march, which headed for the government offices in al-Nabatiyah at noon. Another march for Hizballah, led by flagbearers, passed in front of the government offices. [passage omitted]

In the town of Qana, as in the other towns and villages of the south, the inhabitants, students, and public figures gathered at the town square and marched toward the city of Tyre. The Fijian contingent of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] also joined in the celebrations. It raised a yellow banner bearing the writing Resolution 425 at the entrance of the town and another over its center. Candles were lit in most UNIFIL centers, and mayors and village heads of Tyre and Bint Jubayl addressed memoranda through UNIFIL centers calling on the United Nations to implement Resolution 425 unconditionally. [passage omitted]

Assassination Trial of Ex-U.S. Envoy Postponed

NC1503184095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Supreme Court, chaired by judge Mu'in 'Usayran, postponed until 12 April the start of the trial in the case of the assassination of former U.S. Ambassador in Beirut (Francis Miloy) in 1976 in Beirut. The postponement was requested by Naji Yaghi, the lawyer for defendant Basim al-Furukh. He said he needed time to review the file as he received it only a short time ago. The postponement was also requested by lawyer Roland al-Jumayyil, who said he wanted to see and comment on the repeal decision, which he had not received.

Russia's Kozyrev To Visit Beirut 31 Mar

NC1603122295 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Ambassador in Lebanon Gennadiy Ilichev said Russia's Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev will visit Beirut on 31 March. He previewed the visit's agenda with Ambassador Ramiz Dimashqiyah, chief of protocol at the Foreign Ministry.

Ilichev added that Kozyrev's tour will cover Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Gaza.

The ambassador noted that contacts concerning the peace process call for optimism. He said he hoped the Russian side's contacts to activate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks would succeed and said he hoped that a comprehensive and just peace would be achieved.

Sources: Talks With Israel Not Yet 'Substantive'

JN1603123795 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus said today that Syria and Israel have not reached a substantive point [nuqtah mu'ammaqah] in the search for peace between them, as certain circles try to suggest. Well-informed Syrian sources told Monte Carlo that resumption of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations in Washington on the level of the two ambassadors under U.S. auspices are aimed at discussing principles to which Syria adheres and which Israel rejects. The Syrian sources said security arrangements have not been discussed and that this can be done if the talks between the two ambassadors result in agreement on principles and other issues related to the peace process.

Before leaving Damascus, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that Dennis Ross will tour the region in the near future to try to effect a breakthrough in talks between the Syrian and Israeli chiefs of staff concerning security arrangements.

Press on Christopher's Tour, Resumption of Talks

JN1603082495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, the newspaper AL-BA'TH discusses the Middle East peace process in light of the recent regional tour by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The paper says: It is known that Yitzhaq Rabin's government has frozen and inactivated the peace process by moving from the Washington talks to secret separate talks in order to evade the requirements of peace. On the Syrian track, the Rabin government submitted demands that are by all means unacceptable. In this regard, President al-Asad said maintaining the current situation is better than accepting Israel's demands.

AL-BA'TH adds: Syria will not abandon its positive attitude toward the peace process and the efforts to make it succeed. The U.S. commitment to working for a just and comprehensive peace is one of the factors that encourages Syria to continue this cooperation. The paper says Syria has given more than one proof that it is concerned about reaching the objective of the U.S. initiative, while not relinquishing or selling out one inch of our national soil.

The paper believes the whole world is aware pf the U.S. ability to convince the Israeli rulers of the need to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy. It expresses the conviction that Syria has given the peace process a new opportunity by accepting the resumption of the Washington talks at the ambassadorial level in order to steer the talks on the Syrian track toward their objective. This is not governed by any influence, or fears, or pressures from any side, but by a concern about establishing a just peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Discussing the same topic, AL-THAWRAH's editorial focuses on the importance of the facts regarding the issue of peace in the region. It says: The lengthy march of peace has confirmed that circumventing the realities of peace cannot contribute to achieving a just and comprehensive peace or provide security and stability in the region.

AL-THAWRAH says Syria, which has always declared its adherence to the bases of peace and its response to both international legitimacy and the substance of the U.S. initiative, still emphasizes that it is concerned about and faithful to the requirements of peace, in accordance with the bases of justice, comprehensiveness, balance, and equitability.

Concluding its editorial, the paper says Syria has nothing to fear and that it hides nothing from its people. Syria called for peace of the brave, and it clings to its national and pan-Arab constants. Syria's positions are not subject to bargaining, especially over the issues of territory and rights. Syria reasserts that the Golan and southern Lebanon cannot be subjected to bargaining and sellout.

In another comment, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria only accepted the resumption of negotiations out of its concern about giving the peace process a new opportunity in the hope that it will achieve its objectives. Perhaps, Israel will lose its illusions and become aware that its tricks and maneuvers will only dash the hopes for peace.

The paper adds: While renewing its readiness to cooperate with the peace efforts as well as its commitment to a just and comprehensive solution, Syria calls on all to assume their historic responsibilities. The paper urges the international community and the United States to increase their efforts in order to pressure Israel and find a real opportunity for laying the pillars of a just and comprehensive peace which will end occupation, injustice, and aggression.

Afghanistan

Rabbani Forces Launch Offensive Against Taleban

Taleban 'Pushed Back' in Southwest

LD1503174495 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A source of the Defense Ministry of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA] told a military correspondent of the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY [BIA] that the ISA forces in the west of the country pushed back an attack of the Taleban, and in a counterattack pushed the enemy back 25 km. During this operation the warplanes of the ISA heavily bombarded the Taleban's fortified trenches. As a result of the bombardment, the enemy's BM14 and BM21 rocket launchers and other heavy weapons were destroyed. During the operation the enemy received heavy losses, and the Islamic army's advance continues. A source of the armed forces in the southwest zone called a recent statement by a spokesman of the Taleban on their advance in the southwest zone far from the truth. He said: The enemy has not achieved any victory in recent days. According to another report the Islamic army of the ISA broke the three-pronged offensive of the so-called Taleban. The Islamic army forces were stationed in Kotal-e Takht. Quoting security forces, a correspondent of the BIA reported to us that last night the Taleban group launched an offensive from the directions of Maydanshar, Rishkhor, and Sang-e Naweshta against the positions of the Islamic army of Afghanistan. It met with the resistance of the Islamic army and suffered many losses. In a counterattack the Islamic army forces pushed back the Taleban to Maydanshar in a westerly direction and are stationed in the heights of Kotal-e Takht. After pushing back the Taleban in Sang-e Naweshta, the Islamic army forces took positions in the heights of (?Baramta) and captured Rigi Tapa. During these operations six Taleban were killed and 26 others were captured. Dozens of them were injured too. On top of this one tank, one antiaircraft gun, and 26 Kalashnikovs were captured by the Islamic army forces. The Islamic army's forces heroically pursue their goals against the Taleban. [passage omitted]

Fighting Briefly Halted

BK1503140295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1346 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 15 (AFP)—A tank and infantry offensive against the Afghan Taleban movement by troops loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani in southeastern Kabul ground to a halt late Wednesday [15 March], frontline fighters said.

"Our tanks have withdrawn for servicing and reloading with ammunition," said a pro-Rabbani officer on the eastern frontline.

It appears that Taleban resistance held up the pro-Rabbani morning attack, although at some cost to the Taleban students militants.

"We captured five Taleban prisoners and killed another 12 whose bodies are still lying in the battle-field," said one group of frontline fighters, while according to others the casualties were higher.

These troops were seen in Kabul at the guesthouse of Rabbani's military expert, ex-Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, in the company of two wounded Taleban on their way to the Military Hospital.

There was no change in the southeastern frontlines in the afternoon after some gains in the early morning attack by pro-Rabbani troops, but the Taleban continued a heavy artillery bombardment.

The Sia Bini [name as received] southeastern front command post some 15 kilometres from Kabul was practically deserted of pro-Rabbani commanders Wednesday afternoon, and no heavy weapons were seen fired at the Taleban.

However, this frontline was pounded by Taleban mortar and rocket artillery, as was the capital itself.

Many pro-Rabbani troops were seen relaxing much to the rear of the frontlines, where their Russian-made tanks and armoured personnel vehicles are now parked.

Some of these fighters expressed the opinion that when the current rainy weather clears they will get welcome backup from Mas'ud's jet bombers which cannot strike accurately in overcast skies.

Clashes Continue; Hundreds Dead

LD1603120895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Intense war is raging on among belligerent factions in the various parts of the Afghan capital, Kabul. According to sources in Afghanistan, clashes between the Taleban militia faction and the forces of Commander Isma'il Khan have so far left hundreds of people dead and a great many others wounded. The clashes erupted over the stronghold of Shindand.

The sources further said that the Taleban militia students, in their initial assault, managed to seize control over 20 percent of the areas.

Based on the Afghan sources, forces of Isma'il Khan, with their repeated attacks, attempted to recapture the areas. There is, however, no further news on the incident up to date.

Elsewhere the AFP reports that forces loyal to the Afghan president, Borhanoddin Rabbani, have stopped their attacks on the Taleban group in southeastern Kabul.

IUP Official Denounces Taleban for Mazari Death

NC1603121595 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Abu-'Ali Akhlaqi, media official of the Afghan Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party, IUP], has denounced the Taleban Movement's evil crime against IUP leader Mohammad 'Ali Mazari.

In an interview with the Voice of the Oppressed's radio, he accused the Taleban Movement of ambushing and killing the IUP leader, martyr Shaykh Mazari, and nine of the party's military leaders.

Shaykh Akhlaqi blamed the United States and Russia for what is happening in Afghanistan and noted that they do not plan to establish a powerful and unified regime in the country.

He said that by committing its crime against Shaykh Mazari, the Taleban Movement violated Islamic covenants and principles. He also held President Borhanoddin Rabbani and the forces loyal to him responsible for violating Muslims' honor and property in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Taleban's Version of Death Rejected

LD1503173195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Afghan Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] has rejected the Taleban group's claim that the death of Hojjat ol-Eslam Mazari occurred during a clash. The former said that the Taleban group is directly responsible for the martyrdom of Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari, leader of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami, and it warned that this action by the Taleban will have grave consequences for the latter.

A spokesman for the Taleban group had claimed on Monday [13 March] that Ustad Mazari was killed during a fight inside a helicopter. The Taleban group had earlier captured him. According to a statement by the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami martyr Mazari had accepted a proposal by Taleban leaders for talks but was captured on his way to Chahar Asiab.

Meanwhile, Karim Khalili, a Hezb-e Wahdat spokesman, in a statement in Peshawar, said: Several of the members of Hezb-e Wahdat's Central Council were also martyred along with Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mazari.

India

Congress-I Secures 33 Seats in Arunachal Pradesh

BK1603041995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] In Arunachal Pradesh, the Congress-I has gained absolute majority by winning 33 seats in the 60-member assembly; 47 results are available from 53 constituencies where counting was taken up yesterday. The independents have bagged nine seats; Janata Dal has won three; and Janata Party two. [passage omitted]

'Decisive Turnaround' in Economy Hailed

BK1603062095 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 15 Mar 95 p 11

[Editorial: "Cause for cheer"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The routinely self-congratulatory opening of the Economic Survey should not blind anyone to the fact that Manmohan Singh has achieved a decisive turnaround in the state of the economy in four years. Under the calamitous stewardship of Mandhu Dandavate and Yashwant Sinha, the external debt increased by a massive $8 billion in 1990-91; in April September 1994 it for the first time fell by $270 million. The ratio of debt to exports peaked at 4.7 in 199-92; this year it should come down to 3.5. There is solid improvement of the current account behind this improvement in creditworthiness. Exports covered two-third of imports in 1990-91; in April-September 1994 they covered 89 percent of imports. In 1991 Manmohan Singh was almost the only creditworthy man who could raise billions for a bankrupt country: today he has restored the country's creditworthiness.

Fiscal performance, which is more within the control of the finance minister, shows an equally steady improvement. Government expenditure exceeded total (revenue and capital) receipts throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s; this year there may be a budgetary surplus-and a primary surplus. The budget tomorrow may well show a gross fiscal deficit below the 6 percent of GDP projected last year. The structure of revenue has changed appreciably in the desired direction: the share of customs revenue has fallen from 35.9 percent in 1990-91 to 28.9 percent in 1994-95, whilst the share of personal income tax has risen from 9.3 to 12.5 percent, and the share of corporation tax from 9.3 to 14.3 percent. There has been a substantial dismantling of protection: the average customs duty may well come down from 47 percent in 1990-91 to 25 or 30 percent in the current year. The Survey notes how well industry has coped with the duty reduction, and points towards its continuation. It compares the duty reductions achieved with those recommended by the Chelliah Committee. Although the overall progress is unmistakable, the irrationality of the emerging duty structure strikes one's eye: duty reduction is still furthest from the Chelliah target in the case of the building blocks of industry fibres, polymers, chemicals, steels, nonferrous metals, instruments and components. The reason is clear: there are powerful lobbies producing these inputs, especially public enterprises, The domestic prices of many of these inputs have shot up in the past year. There is every case for accelerating tariff reduction in today's Budget.

The real performance of the economy this year is the best since 1990-91. GDP growth rate should touch 5.3 percent, industrial production is likely to rise 8 percent, and exports increased 16.9 percent in April-December 1994. The growth rate of exports has come down from last year's 20 percent, but the indications are that this is due to the fact that agricultural exports did not grow at all in the first half of the year; manufactured exports continued to grow at a respectable rate.

With so much to be complacent about, it is unsurprising but regrettable that the Survey views inflation rather blandly. It is safe and requires little rigour to blame inflation on all conceivable factors. The ministry may also be right in blaming delayed pass-through effects. But the best remedies at the moment can be indicated even without a deep analysis. Inflation is a politically sensitive issue, it needs to be brought down quickly, and the only fast-acting remedies are on the supply side: faster release of foodgrain stocks, import duty reduction, and removal of constraints on imports of consumer goods, especially mass consumption goods. This is the one issue on which the government should be concentrating its mind at the present moment.

Commercialization of Ordnance Factories Viewed

BK1503043995 Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
15 Mar 95 pp 112-113

[Article by Sunil Dasgupta]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With a twist, it could well be the Indian version of the military-industrial complex. As the fall in profits—a result of being merely a military industry—becomes glaringly evident, ordnance factories are being forced to commercialise their operations, and exploit their tremendous technological potential. Some are going to the extent of aiming to sell half their output to non-defence users. But the factories may be up against seemingly insurmountable problems. With the defence industry, their sole customer, strapped for cash and switching to more cost-effective substitutes from the private sector, ordnance factories across the country have seen their orders fall from Rs 2,500 crore in 1992-93 to an estimated Rs 2,000 crore this year. Hence, they are trying to remould themselves into flourishing industrial units, modifying existing product lines to meet the demands of the civilian market, and sourcing parts from private industries to increase efficiency.

While the move towards the market began after the Arun Singh Committee's recommendations of 1988, calling for delinking the budgets of these units from allocations for the armed forces (in other words, allowing the armed forces more freedom to buy from the private sector), the activity has only now become frenetic. Thus, the clothing unit in Avadi, near Madras, which is part of the ordnance factories establishment, started stitching shirts for the Van Heusen label recently. The Chandigarh factory supplies cables to the telecom industry, and optical instruments such as night vision and laser equipment, manufactured in the Dehradun unit, are sold to non-defence customers.

The Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) which oversees the work of all 39 ordnance factories in the country, is negotiating with Asian Paints to supply it with nitrocellulose, and with the private sector L and T to let out some of its machining facilities. Says Anil Marathe, Land T's senior sales engineer, who is part of the evaluating team examining the possibilities of using the ordnance factories' superior machining facilities: "We are looking at pricing, location and other details, but we will use their services. Their quality is very good." In an international acknowledgement of its ability to deliver quality, the Metal and Steel Factory at Icchapore near Calcutta—one of the country's oldest ordnance units—was recentlt granted the ISO 9002. This brings the figure of ordnance units that have been awarded this certificate to 12. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is offering the Advance Light Helicopter to non-military markets in India and abroad. It already provides maintenance services to airliners, makes turbines and has a computer software joint venture with British Aerospace. It made 300 pairs of doors for the Airbus 320 for export to France. In 1993, HAL joined an Asian consortium to develop and manufacture a regional passenger aircraft. And Mazagaon Dockyard Limited veered its production to target the civil sector: more than 50 per cent of its output today is for the non-defence sector.

The potential on the technical side is tremendous. Bharat Dynamics Limited and Bharat Electronics Limited—which does the electronics and assembly of missiles such as Prithvi—are also in a position to spin off certain technologies. The defence laboratories have offered commercialisation for technologies on effluent treatment, polymer applications, sterilisation, process control equipment, and high-grade machining, among others. Aerospace technologies could be used to descale diesel locomotive engines, in the paint and plating industry, or to improve alloys.

Equally attractive is the possibility of different units teaming up to pool their specialities, much the same way their European and US counterparts have done, when faced with a similar crunch: Germany's MBB and Erance's Dassault Aviation, themselves products of earlier mergers, are collaborating to make the Eurofighter. In the US, McDonnell Douglas and Lockheed Martin are emerging from a spate of mergers as the largest defence companies in the world.

The OFB has recently appointed consultants to help hasten the process. It hired the leading chartered-accounting firm Batliboi and Co to recommend ways to update its accounting practices, and commissioned market-research consultant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to recommend new product lines. Last December, Batliboi recommended sweeping changes in overhead allocations, valuation of stores, cutting inventory lead time, and putting in place material, manpower and budget controls.

TCS has detailed 54 possible product lines, broadly broken up into engineering, chemicals and agro-based products. In engineering, the factories could produce components such as cold- rolled coils for the steel industry, auto parts, capital goods such as cranes, elevators and electrostatic precipitators, or consumer products like sewing machines. Some speciality explosives could be manufactured too. TCS has also recommended the setting up of a marketing organisation necessary to fulfill the projected market potential. Some of these are being implemented. Regional marketing centres are being set up across the country to sell spare capacities and products to industries in their area of operation.

This, unfortunately, may not be enough to keep the industry afloat, a large part of which was set up in a period when the private sector could not meet the needs of the armed forces. The Metal and Steel Factory, set up to manufacture steel for guns—because quality steel was not available in the country at the time—is now redundant, with bigger private steel plants able to supply cost-effective substitutes.

Changing equipment has also made a difference. For instance, with the coming of the 5.56 mm assault gun, the existing line for 7.62 mm guns may be switched to the new product. But the metal magazine-making plant will become useless as the new gun uses plastic magazines, which are being procured by ordnance factories from outside sources.

And excess capacity is something the industry has in abundance. The army's Jabalpur vehicle lines, for example, can churn out 9,000 Jongas while producing Nissan and Shaktiman trucks as well. But with the entry of new players in the automobile industry in the mid-'80s, and a sharp reduction in the army's orders, capacity utilisation has fallen to half—these could decline further as the army wrestles with a long-awaited decision to shift to larger vehicles. The move to sell the "war-winning" Jongas in the open market for use as inter-city taxis has not met with too much success either. The factory has received only 400 orders so far. The response from dealers has, however, been more encouraging, and in the next two months the factory hopes to appoint around 40 dealers across the country. Though the TCS report estimates the short-term potential of "civil trade" to be worth Rs 400 crore, it is expected to touch Rs 1,000 crore only in the long run.

A related problem is inefficiency. In most of the ordnance factories in the country, 60 per cent of the annual output takes place only in the last two months of every financial year—February and March. Which means higher overtime costs as factories burn the proverbial midnight oil to meet targets at the end of the year, as also the fact that, at best, 50 per cent of capacities are actually utilised. The effect is finally reflected in the prices charged by ordnance factories and private companies. For parkas and ankle boots, the difference is almost half, while the difference in combat jackets is 184 per cent. Can it hope to meet the market requirement if its prices are so high? Unlikely.

"For that, they need to have a market orientation. They must look at joint ventures with the private sector," says Pravir Das, who heads a special cell at the Confederation of Indian Industry set up to encourage civilian application of spin-off technologies and the entry of private industry into the defence sector. "The defence industry could provide the production base and the private industry could market it."

The DRDO [Defense Research Development Organization], for example, has been somewhat successful with vendor development outside the traditional fold. As many as 42 companies are involved in making the Prithvi missile, many of them in the private sector,such as Godrej and Boyce and Bashi Aerospace Limited. A small Bangalore company set up by a few air force engineers who worked in HAL, Bashi Aerospace is now working on the airframe of the light combat aircraft. Bashi and a Tata company have developed the Indian version of the global positioning system, which is going to be the next generation of air and sea navigation aid. But possibly the biggest problem that these units will face is the bloated workforce.

With a labour force of around 1.69 lakh persons and a turnover of Rs 2,000 crore, the industry is anything but efficient—Reliance Industries achieves two and a half times that turnover with 15,000 employees. As in the case of its counterparts in the public sector, the surplus labour is turning away potential suitors.

Telco was negotiating for the outright purchase of the Jabalpur vehicle line, but the deal fell through because the Tatas refused to take in more than 25 per cent of the workforce.

Changes in attitude could also take a while. So, R.N. Sharma, HAL chairman, says that no job is too small for him to handle, but adds in the same breath: "You can't really compare us with commercial operations. We are the infrastructure set up by the country to attain self-reliance. " But with efficiency rather than self-sufficiency becoming the guiding principle, these units will certainly be squeezed further. That, along with their refusal to change fast enough, could sound their death knell.

TV Channel for 'Overseas Indians' Launched

BK1503072995 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1630 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The international channel of Doordarshan was launched today by the minister for information and broadcasting, Mr. K.P. Singhdeo. The channel will be on the air from Monday to Friday between 0900 [0330 GMT] and 1200 noon through ASIASAT-1 satellite.

In congratualtory message, the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, said this will bring wholesome Indian cultural entertainment to millions of overseas Indians and also provide them a portrayal of India's nation-building activities.

Iran

Clinton Ban on Conoco Oil Cooperation Viewed

LD1503221395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] CNN reports that Clinton has told American companies today that they are not allowed to cooperate with Iran in the oil exploration industry.

Political observers believe that this move by Clinton is merely a childish political gesture, which stems from having too many problems, and from his reduced popularity in U.S. public opinion, since there are many rivals among the European countries and other states in the world in the oil exploration industry.

U.S. Move Called 'Illegal'

NC1603103895 Paris AFP in English 0847 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16 (AFP)—Iran on Thursday [16 March] denounced as "illegal" President Bill Clinton's ban on US companies developing its oil industry but said it would be able to find other partners in Europe or Japan.

Clinton signed an executive order imposing the ban on Wednesday and the US company Conoco pulled out of a billion-dollar deal signed last week to develop two offshore oil fields in the Gulf.

Deputy foreign minister Mahmud Va'ezi described the American move as a "political and propaganda maneuver" and said it was "illegal."

He added, in an interview with the IRAN NEWS, that "we are able to manage, such moves do not affect our economy."

"It will be the American company which will suffer financially, not Iran."

However, another unidentified foreign ministry official told the TEHRAN TIMES that the Conoco decision would delay development of the Sirri A and E fields.

But he added the contract "will be taken up soon by other foreign partners because the Europeans and the Japanese have already announced readiness to undertake the project."

"Some of them have already participated in the project's tender," he said in a reference to the French companies Total and Elf-Aquitaine.

Oil Minister on U.S. 'Propaganda'

LD1603142095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0900 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dear listeners, we present the last live phone-in program of this year's "In Line With The People, In Step With the Officials". Today's guest is the honorable minister for oil, Engineer [Gholam Reza] Aqazadeh-Kho'i. We invite you to raise your questions by ringing telephone numbers 204-0085 and 204-0086 [passage omitted]

[Announcer] I would like to ask you a question about a ban [on oil agreements with Iran] apparently proposed by the Americans?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] We obtained a five percent share of a large consortium which is active in expanding Azerbaijan's oil resources. The Americans are opposed to this and are trying to somehow prevent us from joining in. In my opinion they will not have much success in this.

However, with regard to the latest news, I must say that in our first and second five-year economic development plans we decided to implement major projects in a particular way. That is, when we decide to set up a petrochemical complex, to expand an oil field, or to build a new oil refinery, we sign buy-back deals. This means we obtain credit to build a factory by selling the future product of this factory in advance. [passage omitted]

We have a field in the Persian Gulf named Sirri-E and Sirri-A. We put this to international tender and various world companies participated. Among them was a competing company named Conoco. Of course, this is originally a U.S. company, but it registered its name as a company from the Netherlands. We signed the agreement with this Dutch company. This company offered its bid and since its offer was highly competitive, we signed an agreement. This is a natural daily occurrence in our country. For instance, yesterday I signed an agreement with German companies to rebuild the Abu Zar [offshore] oil platform and to expand the huge Southern Pars gas field—you will probably hear the news of this later, through the media. This is highly significant news. I am trying to say that we sign many such similar contracts every day.

After signing the agreement we suddenly realized that Mr. Clinton was making sensational propaganda out of it. He said: This company [Conoco] should have not signed such a deal. Of course, he is lying, because a spokesman for the Conoco company announced: From the start of taking part in the tender and all through the negotiating process, I let the U.S. Department of State know of the proceedings.

However, when the deal was published by the press, the hypocrisy of the U.S. Government and of Clinton was revealed to the world. As a result, an acutely adverse news climate was created against the Americans. The volume of the criticism, exposing the extent of Mr. Clinton's and his colleagues' hypocrisy and duplicity, forced them to adopt a reactionary stand. They tried to silence the propaganda by saying: We are banning the company from going ahead with this project.

We say: Fine, do not proceed. We do not need you. We, in the world, do not need them at all. It was they who came and pleaded to be allowed to participate in this tender. Why should we need them? What happened was a fully stage-managed show. They created a climate of adverse propaganda inside the United States. This is purely because this gentlemen's [Clinton's] position in the coming elections is a bit shaky. He is seeking to find a subject to exploit for propaganda purposes. But he is still behaving in a clumsy manner here. There is no doubt that this move will work against him too. In my opinion, this was a very crude propaganda move, a panic reaction by the clumsy U.S. Government.

I would like to say here that not only do we not need them at all, rather our own technical know-how is not much behind that of U.S. companies. In some respects we are even ahead. We are now the second largest oil exporter in the world. We are the fourth oil producer in the world. All this industry is managed by our own manpower. [passage omitted]

There are many requests [from other countries] to work with Iran. I therefore wish to summarize by saying: What happened was a reactive move, clumsy and raw, and far from international norms. We are asked by other companies: How is it possible that the U.S. Government was unaware for two years that the said company was negotiating with us. Their action was very crude. These things will have no effect on our activities. There is no cause for concern either. Basically, we do not need them at all.

[Announcer] Thank you very much. [passage omitted] Mr. Aqazadeh-Kho'i, are there any plans to send our experts [to other countries] to earn extra income and also to provide employment for our experts?

[Aqazadeh-Kho'i] I should mention that Libya's key oil production posts are currently filled by Iranian [experts]. That is, those posts are filled by experts who have gone there from Iran. This happened following a request by Mr. Al-Qadhdfafi a few years ago, ten years ago. We sent some experts there to mange Libya's oil industry. Recently we signed a number of contracts with a Libyan oil company for drilling projects and for work on acids.

What I can say, in response to your question, is that when the manpower is busy working production increases, but if there is no work, even those who are employed can face setbacks. [passage omitted]

'Jewish Influence' Alleged

LD1603132195 Tehran IRNA in English 1253 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March, 16, IRNA—In an attempt to put pressure on Iran and to appease the Zionist regime, the U.S. President, Bill Clinton, declared on Tuesday [14 March] his intention to block a deal by a U.S. oil company's subsidiary to help Iran develop two Persian Gulf oil fields, wrote a morning daily Thursday.

CONOCO decided to withdraw under pressure from the board members of its parent company, Du Pont, the english-language TEHRAN TIMES added.

"The decision manifests the extent of Jewish influence in the decision making in the United States", it said adding that, Edgar Bronfman, who is also the head of World Jewish Congress, was among Du Pont's board members who pressured CONOCO to cancel its one-billion-dollar agreement.

Jewish stockholders from Du Pont played an active role to see to it that the deal, which was both in the interest of Iran and the United States was cancelled, the editorial said.

A one-billion-dollar contract could be easily translated into 50,000 new jobs for Americans, it said adding that, the measures taken by the Jewish board members of Du Pont, in line more with the interest of the Zionist regime than with the needs of the U.S. people, showed, once again, that the Jewish businessmen in the U.S. are not loyal to the American people and that their loyalty lies, first and foremost, with the Zionist regime.

"During a decade and half since the culmination of the Islamic revolution the United States has tried every avenue to weaken the strong revolutionary spirit of the Islamic Republic," the daily underlined.

It was through the U.S. machinations and encouragement that the Iraqi regime began the war against Iran, it said adding that, throughout the war, the U.S. helped the Iraqi aggression by providing intelligence reports and material to the Baathist regime.

The U.S. enmity towards Iran is rooted in the Iranian defiance, it stressed and added, "no country in the world has ever stood so steadfast against the U.S. No country in the world has ever humiliated the U.S. as Iran did in taking the American hostages for 444 days of captivity."

"The U.S. is also unhappy with Iran for refusing to support the shabby charade they call the mideast 'peace process', "the article said, "Iran has its won objections to this raw deal, but as far as the U.S. is concerned that is besides the point.

"As far as the U.S.-Zionist strategy is concerned, all countries in the world should tow the U.S. line, otherwise they will have to face the consequences of being a non-conformist," it added.

The U.S. has yet to find out that the Iranians put up with eight years of destructive war because they knew that on the face of it they were fighting the Baathist forces, but in reality they were fighting the United States, it said adding that, "indeed what Iran suffered, and for which it was ready to sacrifice thousands of its best sons, was not the Iraq-Iran war, but the U.S.-Iran war."

The U.S. officials must realize that as it did not succeed in its war against the resilient nation of Iran, it will also fail in any financial war that it launches against Iran, it suggested.

"The U.S. is wrong in imagining that Iranians, who have historically been among the world's best traders, will fail in finding investment partners and in strengthening their economy," the paper reiterated.

"Now that the war is on, it is also up to Iranians to boycott all types of American products in a tit-for-tat measure," it proposed concluding that, "if the U.S. wants to ensure that our economy does not prosper, we must take measures to make sure that the U.S. products are not sold in our market."

Ban To Have No 'Impact'

LD1603133595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. President, Bill Clinton, in the continuation of his same old efforts against the Islamic Republic of Iran, has embarked on a fresh round of moves to step up Washington's activities on what is termed as imposing a politico-economic isolation on Iran.

According to an AFP report, the U.S. President, on Wednesday, 15 March, issued a decree on the U.S. oil companies, barring them from any cooperation in Iran's oil expanding programs. Based on the same report, in the order it has been mentioned that the measures and policies adopted by the Iranian Government pose a grave threat to the American national security.

America's hostile policies against the Islamic Republic of Iran within the past few weeks, and a springing up of claims on Iran's plan of mass killing and the deployment of ground-to-air missiles in the Persian Gulf have reached their peak, and at present the fresh round of efforts made by the U.S. on checking any expansion of oil sources by Iran have added another chapter to the U.S. Government's anti-Iranian policies.

The recent moves taken by the United States, like its other measures in the past, lack any sort of sanction, and are nothing beyond hollow remarks and threatening resolutions. Such restrictions imposed by the United States will turn out to be to the detriment of the U.S. oil corporations themselves before doing any harm to the Islamic Republic of Iran's economic trend, for other great Asian and European companies are willing to participate in Iran's programs.

According to the Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati's remarks in an interview with the IRAN NEWS daily, contrary to what the U.S. statesmen have in mind, the heyday of the U.S. Government has come to an end, and in light of the national interests of China, Japan, Germany, France and Russia, the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing a vast spectrum of alternatives for putting its bi- or even multilateral plans into practice.

The U.S. company's [as heard] measure on not cooperating with Iran on the expansion of its oil sources will meet the same fate of the U.S. government's move on preventing Iran's membership in Azerbaijan's oil consortium. It will suffer a set back.

All in all, viewing the events realistically and unbiasedly will leave no light spot in the recent policies of the U.S. Government against the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is because Iran's regional and international politico-economic relations are quite impregnable. Hence, the U.S. President's orders will fail to have any impact on the foundation of Iran's policies whatsoever.

U.S. Firm's Prestige 'Tarnished'

LD1603080795 Tehran IRNA in English 0740 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—The English-language daily IRAN NEWS here Thursday [16 March] commented on the U.S. President Bill Clinton's Tuesday executive order for blocking Iran-U.S. oil company Conoco's March 5 contract to develop an off-shore oilfield in the Persian Gulf.

It wrote in its editorial that apart from the financial and legal consequences of blocking the said contract, the recent Washington move reflects the American firm's failure to adhere to commitments they undertook in regard to trade partners.

"Washington's haste in annulling the Conoco-Iran contract tarnished the image of the American firms which claim to be independent and non-political on the scene of global free trade," said the article.

The editorial further added that "Iran's present status in the global market affords it a chance to choose trade and commercial partners. Tehran actually selects its trade partners after seeing what each has to offer. This principle also applied to Conoco."

Now, wrote the editorial, to look at the U.S. cancellation of such a contract will irreparably damage the prestige of Washington which relies on market economy and wishes to maintain balance in trade relations.

The logical upshot of the recent U.S. move is bitter for Washington: If American firms prove to renege on their commitments even in one instance, they will lose their credibility, and other potential partners will hesitate to trust them, the daily noted.

IRAN NEWS concluded by saying that by annulling the Conoco-Iran contract, Clinton marred the international credibility and prestige of American companies by proving that they are not able to remain true to their commitments.

NIOC, German-Dutch Oil Firm Reach Agreement

LD1603135595 Tehran IRNA in English 1308 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) on Wednesday [15 March] reached agreement with a German-Dutch oil consortium on reconstruction of Pars and Abuzar oil fields in southern Iran.

According to the public relations office of Oil Ministry, German I.A.B. and the Netherlands' John Brown Companies undertook to provide services to finance the project.

Iranian Oil Ministry said that a consortium of German banks would provide credits for the two development projects.

Lebanese Source: Ahmad Khomeyni 'Died Today'

NC1503125495 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The son of Imam Khomeyni, Hojjat-ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni, died today in Tehran after a major deterioration in his health as a result of a severe drop in his blood pressure.

Khomeyni was taken to hospital three days ago. He went into a coma when his brain stopped functioning after he suffered a heart attack.

Tehran Urdu: Condition 'Improving'

NC1503140395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Urdu 1330 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Arefi, the head of the medical team treating the son of Imam Khomeyni (may God's blessings be upon him), Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Haj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, said in an interview tonight that the result of the doctors' efforts is hopeful and Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni has emerged from last night's critical condition to a considerable extent [as heard]. His heart is functioning again.

Dr. 'Arefi added: Ahmad Khomeyni's blood pressure is responding to medication, and the sonography [preceding word in English] report is better than the one done last night. His blood sugar has reached normal and thus his health is, relatively speaking, improving. We are continuing the treatment as before.

Doctor: '99 Percent' Brain Dead

LD1503164695 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Arefi, the head of a medical team treating Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Haj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, described his latest physical condition during an interview today with our correspondent. He said: Since last night the state of health of the souvenir of his eminence the imam, may God's blessing be upon him, is most serious. The reason is that his brain, which in fact rules the body organs, is not functioning.

He added: The physicians' are continuing their efforts ceaselessly, but any results from all the effort depends on the state of the brain, which, unfortunately, has ceased to function by more than 99 percent.

Dr. 'Arefi said: In such a state any treatment of the patient is outside the scope of capabilities of the physicians, and we must pin our hopes only on God's blessing and the people's prayers. That is why we ask the Muslim and grateful people of Iran to ask God Almighty even more for the speedy recovery of the souvenir of his eminence Imam Khomeyni, may God be satisfied with him.

Doctor Updates Condition

NC1603073295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Arefi, who is treating Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Haj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, gave an interview to our correspondent at 0630 today and commented on the general condition of the son of the late imam.

[Begin recording] ['Arefi] His brain showed minimal activity and the encephalograms yesterday showed extremely minimal activity. The second thing is his kidney, which was previously functioning better, deteriorated. Efforts to control the [word indistinct], which is the factor that causes the yellow color in the body and should be discharged from the body, were also in vain. Also, the kidneys have not yet started to function. The only organ which operated well was his heart which started to be irregular and the heartbeat was completely irregular for about seven hours. However, his blood pressure became acceptable up to a certain point after we administered medicine, serum, blood, and plasma. But between 2230 and 2300 his blood pressure fell and became hard to control with medicine and with serum therapy and things became difficult. At about midnight we completely lost him for a moment, but by increasing the dosage of the medicines that were being administered, his blood pressure stabilized and his general condition improved.

At any rate, I should tell you that we are currently facing a very bad situation. However, we are continuing treatment by increasing the dosage of medicines, with serum, and by blood transfusions when necessary.

We have an urgent need for the good prayers of his friends and we hope that with your prayers we will be able to carry out our duties better.

Bushehr Power Plant Director Interviewed

LD1203115095 Tehran IRNA in English 1030 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 12, IRNA—The first unit of Bushehr Atomic Power plant, with the production capacity of 1,000 megawatt electricity, will become operational with the cooperation of Russia in the next four years, said head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization Reza Amrollahi here Sunday [12 March].

Speaking to IRNA in an exclusive interview, the official stressed that the power plant would be used only for peaceful purposes and merely for generating electricity.

The agreement for the completion of the power plant was signed between Iran and Russia, in Tehran two months ago.

According to the agreement, in addition to providing fuel for the power plant, Russia has undertaken to complete and put the plant into operation with the cooperation of the Iranian experts.

At present, Amrollahi added, some 200 Russian and 500 Iranian experts and technicians are cooperating in the construction and completion of the power plant.

Stressing that construction of Bushehr power plant is necessary to meet the need to electricity generation in the country, the official said that over 17 percent of the world electricity is bening generated by atomic power plants.

Referring to the fact that the right to development has been stipulated in human rights resolution, Amrollahi noted that measures taken by certain countries to put pressure on Iran over the issue of atomic energy had negated such a right.

As for the U.S. and Zionist regime's propaganda on possession of nuclear technology by Iran, the official told IRNA that Iran was a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and also a signatory to the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty].

According to the Article Four of the treaty, Amrollahi noted, every country had the right to cooperate with other countries for making peaceful use of atomic energy.

He added that even the Russian officials in response to vicious propaganda of the U.S., had termed any concern over over Iran-Russia atomic cooperation as baseless.

Referring to the fact that representatives of the IAEA have for several times inspected Iran's atomic installations, Amrollahi called on the IAEA to inspect the Zionist regime's nuclear installations as well.

He added that the Zionist regime should answer the international circles why it had rejected to join NPT and had refused to permit the IAEA experts to inspect its nuclear installations.

Amrollahi stressed that the Zionist regime's access to nuclear weapons would pose a serious threat to peace and security in the Middle East.

IAEA Praises Cooperation

LD1503222295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The International Atomic Energy Agency has praised Iran's Atomic Energy Organization for its close cooperation.

The chief of the IAEA press office, making a statement to that effect, said: The Islamic Republic of Iran's level of cooperation with those who have visited and who visit Iran to inspect its atomic energy industries on behalf of the IAEA has been extraordinary and much greater than expected of a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Council Approves Funds for Power Distribution

LD1203084195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0730 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Economic Council approved 1,105,122,000 rials for the implementation of 88 power distribution projects by the Ministry of Power. According to a report by the Central New Unit the projects include power distribution in Semnan, Hormozgan, Mazandaran, Zanjan, Isfahan, Kerman, Khorasan, Azarbaijan, Sistan va Baluchestan, and Yazd.

Trial of MKO Members Opens in Tehran

LD1503140195 Tehran IRNA in English 1254 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 15, IRNA—The public trial of three members of the terrorist Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) arrested early summer on charges of killing some Christian pastors and attempting to plant bombs at the shrine of Hazrat Ma'soumeh in Qom and in the mausoleum of the late Imam Khomeyni, started here Wednesday morning.

The MKO terrorists, Ms. Batul Vaferi, Ms. Maryam Shahbazpour and Ms. Farahnaz Anami, have all pleaded guilty to all charges levelled against them in the indictment.

Foreign and Iranian reporters as well as families of the MKO terrorists and a group of people were present in the opening day of the trial.

Despite the refusal of the terrorists to get lawyers, the court has assigned three defence lawyers to defend them.

First Session Begins

LD1503175095 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The first session of the public trial of the three members of the hypocrites [Mojehedin-e Khalq] organization, who are accused of murdering three Christian priests and placing bombs at the shrine of

Her Holiness Ma'sumeh, peace be upon her, and the shrine of His Holiness the Imam [Khomeyni], may God be satisfied with him, started this morning at branch number one of the Islamic Revolution Court in Tehran.

According to a Central News Unit correspondent's report, at the trial, which was attended by foreign and Iranian cameramen and correspondents and members of the public, the charges against the accused concerning the murder of three Christian priests was read out. Then the accused made statements.

Batul Vaferi, defendant number one, admitted the charges and said the aim of the hypocrites in murdering the priest Mikailiyan was to show that the rights of religious minorities were not observed in Iran. She said: The world should know that the financial and political support of Western countries for the hypocrites resulted in the murder of the Christian priests.

Farahnaz Anami, defendant number two, also admitted all the charges. She said: I call on all human rights forums in the world to condemn the leaders of the hypocrites organization for their crimes and treason against the innocent people of Iran and to punish them for their deeds.

Maryam Shahbazpur, defendant number three, also admitted the charges. She described herself as a victim of the cursed aims of the hypocrites organization. She said: The result of the financial and political support of Western countries for the hypocrites organization is oppression and crime against the Muslim people of Iran and the violation of human rights in the world.

President Rafsanjani Returns From ECO Summit

LD1603093195 Tehran IRNA in English 0705 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani returned here early Thursday [16 March] from Islamabad where he took part in the third summit meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Upon his arrival at Mehrabad Airport, he told reporters that he made his trip shorter due to the condition of Hojatoleslam Ahmad Khomeyni.

He said that discussions which remained unfinished due to the same reason would be continued during the trip to Iran of the heads of state of a number of ECO member countries for the inauguration of Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway.

As for the agreements reached among members states he referred to the establishment of ECO development and trade bank, reinsurance company, air and shipping lines as well as establishment of ECO cultural center in Tehran and scientific center in Islamabad.

The organization also underlined the need for the expansion of transport and communication networks, provide facitlities to waiver visa requirements for businessmen and help expansion of stable economy in the region, he added.

Rafsanjani reiterated that establishment of a joint free trade zone and free international exhibitions were among topics also discussed in the meeting.

Commenting on situation in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, he stated that a group is to be formed to find solutions to the two problems.

The heads of state also exchanged views on situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Karabakh and Somalia, the president concluded.

Commentary Views Outcome

NC1603150895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Economic Cooperation Organization, ECO, ended its two days of talks and discussions and issued a communique known as the Islamabad Communique in which the ECO member-countries emphasize the need for cooperation to expand communication and transportation, to promote free trade and joint investment, to preserve the environment, and to make favorable use of energy resources.

The ECO members also signed documents on the implementation of four fundamental ECO projects, on which agreements had been previously reached. The four projects are: the establishment of a trade and development bank, a reinsurance company, a navigation company, and a joint airline.

The ECO summit's final communique describes efforts for further freedom of trade, following up economic policies, and efforts to gain access to regional and international markets as a struggle for the ECO member-countries who are called on to do their best to make this struggle succeed.

This assessment among the ECO member-countries stems from the current developments in the international order. The current process in various parts of the world is a process which is moving toward the formation of regional unions. Various countries in the four corners of the world are striving to create regional unions and to put together their resources and potentials and to thus achieve a strength which will be able to respond to the daily-increasing demands of the current societies. Thus, political analysts describe the new international order as one which is based on mutual relations within the framework of regional unions and believe that under such an order the countries can play an effective role and meet their demands only by creating regional unions.

This fact, which multiplies the need for regional cooperation, encourages the ECO member-countries for more cooperation and conformity with the new conditions in the world. The ECO started an extensive effort three years ago toward this end. After the first ECO summit in 1370 [year ending 20 March 1991], the ECO member-countries increased from three to 10 members. The third ECO summit was held at a time when with the membership of 10 countries in this regional organization, a market covering about 7 million squre km with approximately a 300-million strong population is created. This extensive market, with the boost that it will give to regional economy, grants the member-countries to put together their potentials and resources and to play an effective role in the international scene and to safeguard the interests of their nations in the competition with the other regional unions.

Habibi, Greek Minister Discuss EU Policy

LD1503174395 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Greek minister of public order this afternoon met and conferred with First Vice President Hasan Habibi this afternoon. During the meeting, the minister expressed the sympathy of the Greek Government and nation for the illness of the esteemed son of His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, may he be admitted to God's paradise, and said: Greece has always considered Iran as a close friend and follows up matters relating to the expansion of its ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He gave assurances that the Greek Government will take advantage of its presence in the European Union to transfer the Islamic Republic of Iran's viewpoints to the European countries in order to neutralize some of the negative propaganda being waged against Iran.

During the same meeting, Mr. Habibi referred to the particular significance of the two countries' cooperation in security matters and said: The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stated its determination in the anti-drug campaign and has shown its seriousness in practice.

Mr. Habibi also stressed the need for the expansion of relations between Iran and Greece, and the necessity for greater bilateral cooperation.

Final Stage of Naval Exercises in Persian Gulf

LD1503130795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The fourth and final stage of the Fath-4 exercises in the northern waters of the Persian Gulf ended at noon today.

This stage of the exercises, codenamed Ya 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib, was aimed at retrieving captured positions. After the aircraft of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran bombed the positions of the imaginary enemy; gunboats, small battleships, and units of the Navy of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a coordinated and extensive offensive, using complex naval techniques, brought the positions of the imaginary enemy under heavy fire.

Then Armed Forces and Guards Corps marines carried out an operation to capture a bridgehead and infiltrate the positions of the imaginary enemy. They attacked the enemy, destroyed enemy equipment, and embarked on fortifying the captured positions.

The imaginary enemy, on a number of occasions, attempted to stage chemical attacks; but the enemy's feeble attempts were foiled thanks to effective and timely measures by our forces' chemical defense unit. The forces involved carried out a tactical phase and anti-aircraft fire on a wide scale and began fortifying the captured positions.

Nepal

Army Importing Rocket Launcher Ammunition

BK1503150695 Hong Kong AFP in English 1447 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 15 (AFP)—Nepal is importing ammunition for rocket launchers from Sweden, a highly placed Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) source told AFP Wednesday [15 March].

The source said a peaceful country like Nepal needed to import ammunition for manual rocket launchers solely to train its soldiers. The source, however, did not disclose the number of manual rocket launchers currently in possession of the Nepalese army nor when the weapons had been imported.

A pro-leftist vernacular weekly the "Jana Aastha" (People's Faith) on Wednesday quoted Nepalese Chief of Army Staff General Gadul Shamsher Rana saying that the Nepalese army was importing rocket launchers from Sweden.

The RNA source denied this saying only that ammunition was being imported.

The news has embarrassed Nepal's first communist government which is trying its best to improve its relations with its southern giant neighbour India, a Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) source said.

A 1950 treaty gives India political leverage over Nepal and a 1965 agreement cites that Nepal should get the clearance from India to bring in any kind of weapon.

Angered by Nepal's importing of anti-aircraft guns and tanks from China, India imposed economic sanctions against the then Panchayat government in the late 1980s, paralyzing the Nepalese national economy.

There was no immediate reaction from the Indian Embassy to the reports of ammunition imports from Sweden.

Pakistan

Murder of Diplomats Linked to Mosque Attacks

BK1503155795 Hong Kong AFP in English 1543 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Pakistan, March 15 (AFP)—Pakistani investigators believe that the recent killing of two American consulate staff officers may be linked to attacks on two mosques last month.

Preliminary reports show that a group of six or seven men may have carried out the ambush of the two Americans on March 8, and attacked two Shi'ite Muslim mosques on February 25, killing twenty people, officials said.

Pakistani authorities have released sketches of four men suspected of involvement in the cases.

Ballistic evidence indicates that the same weapons were used to attack the Shi'ite mosques and a subsequent attack on a house on March 2 in which seven Sunni Muslim men were gunned down, the officials said.

"We are still awaiting the results on ballistics for the American case," one official said. "If they match up (to the ballistics reports on the Shi'ite mosques) we will have hard evidence that one gang is behind the killings."

"They are hired killers," the official, who asked not to be identified, added. He said their affiliations or names were not known and refused to comment on who may have hired the assassins. "It's too early for that," he said.

U.S. View on Trial of Murder Suspects Noted

BK1503130095 Karachi DAWN in English 15 Mar 95 p 9

[Editorial: "A judicious view"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The opinion expressed by Justice (retd) Dorab Patel, a former judge of Pakistan's Supreme Court, that any move to try outside Pakistan the persons suspected of the murder of two American nationals in Karachi the other day would be inconsistent with the laws and Constitution of this country merits strong endorsement. Justice Patel, who is chair-person emeritus of the Pakistan's Human Rights Commission, is held in high esteem for his unqualified and consistent support to the rule of law. His view that the suspected assassins of the American nationals, as and when they are apprehended, should face trial within Pakistan is one based on principle, in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution. US Ambassador John Monjo's contention that since the murder of Americans overseas is a crime under the American law, the US government would have the powers to pursue the perpetrators of the crime for the purpose of a trial in an American court appears to be based on a misunderstanding. Such a move would manifestly be in conflict with the provisions of Pakistan's Constitution quoted by Justice Patel. Stretching the provisions of the law or attempting to circumvent them, in order to suit the circumstances of a particular case, would set a precedent fraught with unforeseeable complications and would thus be ill-advised.

The other part of Ambassador Monjo's reported statement that the suspect persons could be brought to justice in the United States in addition to whatever measures the Pakistan government may take for their trial appears to be even more problematic. If such a thing happened, it would in effect amount to a second trial of the suspects, something that is specifically barred under the fundamental rights provided in the Constitution. The Constitution clearly says that no person shall be prosecuted or punished for the same offence more than once.

It would equally be inadvisable to overcome these difficulties by amending the Extradition Act, because, as Justice Patel has pointed out, the Constitution is the country's supreme law and any statute inconsistent with it is prima facie void. In any case, the Extradition Act is applicable only in cases committed in the territory of the country asking for an accused person's extradition. The murder of the two Americans was committed on Pakistan's soil and it is difficult to see how the Extradition Act could be invoked to take any suspected persons out of the country in this case. Even in the case of Mr Ramzi Yusuf who was quietly extradited to the US to stand trial for his alleged involvement in the bombing of the Trade Centre, the correct legal procedure would have been to first produce him before a Pakistani magistrate. There is nothing publicly known to suggest that this legal requirement was duly met.

Ambassador Monjo should feel reassured by the fact that the murder of the two American nationals in Karachi has been universally condemned in Pakistan. There is no question of the crime being viewed except with the utmost sense of compunction. There should be no reason for the Ambassador or any other American dignitary, to believe that the demands of justice would not be fully met if the trial of the suspects in the case is held in a Pakistani court of law. On the other hand, it would be a matter of great deal of embarrassment for Pakistan if the American authorities were to insist upon the suspect being sent outside the country to face a trial in the US on the analogy of the trial of a Mexican national cited by Justice Patel in his statement.

Bhutto View on ECO Members' Ties Discussed

BK1503131895 Islamabad THE NATION in English 15 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "ECO commences"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in her opening statement at the Economic Cooperation

Organisation (ECO) summit currently being held at Islamabad expressed the hope that there was scope for expansion of economic ties between member countries. She stressed the fact that the entire region was rich in natural resources including oil and gas even though there was a dearth of capital within the region. She also lamented what she termed uneven economic development between the member countries, a fact which could well lead to an inability on the part of ECO to agree on an agenda; for the type of monetary, customs and labour union that is being envisaged by the most advanced trading bloc in the world today, i.e., the European Community. Ms Bhutto also acknowledged the fact that all ECO members have promoted privatisation or market reform in spite of the inherent unpopularity of the reforms. However, what Ms Bhutto ignored was the complementarity of manufacturing products between member countries. Cotton is a staple agricultural produce in member countries which are competing internationally for markets. With the ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement within the next ten years and with the lifting of cotton quota restrictions beyond that timeframe, this competition is likely to become more intense. A second factor acting as a deterrent to enhanced economic ties within the region is the fact that Central Asian Republics still look towards Russia as the main pillar of strength from which their currencies derive their value. The Central Asian Republics have also shown concern over what they term as the rising tide of 'fundamentalism' within the founding members of ECO, and have expressed their concern over the refusal of Pakistan to allow them passage all the way to India. And then, of course, there is the problem of Afghanistan. Being aware of impediments in the way of successful blocs is, however, a step in the right direction. The next step is to work in those areas where enhanced cooperation is possible.

Already a beginning has been made in this regard. The ECO envisages a reinsurance centre in Pakistan, an airline and shipping company to be based in Turkey, and a development bank in Iran. There is also going to be talk on visa liberalisation and preferential tariffs for those products that can be traded between member countries. In today's world of trading blocs and interdependant economies, going it alone is no longer an economically viable policy. However, such regional blocs can only work provided its members have the political will to iron out their differences and remove the impediments.

Chinese Delegation Leader on Joint Ventures

BK1503034095 Hong Kong AFP in English 1148 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, March 14 (AFP)—A Chinese trade delegation arrived here Tuesday to promote products and explore joint venture possibilities with Pakistan, officials said.

The 47-member team representing 35 companies from Xinjiang, Qinghai and Gansu provinces will hold talks with Pakistani business leaders and officials in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

It plans to promote Chinese products including, chemicals, ferrous and mineral, electrical goods, cables, cotton and sugar, delegation leader Ding Fangfang told AFP.

She said talks would be held on possible joint ventures in manufacturing of electrical goods, chemicals, metals and motorcycle assembly.

Bilateral trade between the two countries is heavily in China's favour.

Pakistan's imports from China stood at about 440 million dollars against exports of nearly 53 million dollars durin 1993-94.

Government Extends Credit to Kazakhstan

BK1503072295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Under an agreement signed in Islamabad yesterday, Pakistan will extend a credit of about $60 million to Kazakhstan for the supply of a cement plant. The Heavy Mechanical Complex will provide a cement plant of 1,000 to 2,000 tons per day capacity based on modern technology. This credit will be given under the Government of Pakistan's policy to promote and strengthen economic cooperation with Central Asian states.

Cabinet Actions on 'Terrorism,' Narcotics Viewed

BK1503131495 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 15 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Crackdown on terrorists"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Federal Cabinet, with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in chair, has taken a number of decisions. The Cabinet meeting reviewed in detail the law and order situation in Karachi where more than 350 terrorists have been arrested in a fresh crackdown. The Cabinet decided that elements responsible for encouraging criminals would be dealt with an iron hand. Two other decisions taken at the Cabinet meeting pertained to environment and pollution. The Cabinet approved a proposed Merchant Shipping Bill which would empower the Government to exercise control on pollution from ships to protect the marine life and impose a fine ranging from 50,000 to one million dollars on ships responsible for creating environmental hazards. In view of the havoc played with the Master Plan of Islamabad because of demolition of green areas, thereby creating environmental problems, the Cabinet decided to approach the Opposition for enacting an amendment in the Constitution to protect the green areas of the city and save it from pollution. Another decision related to the setting up of a commission with two judges of superior courts to scrutinise assets of Government officers in the pay scale 20 and above.

The Prime Minister has been closely monitoring the Karachi situation. She made a dash to the city earlier this week and gave specific directives to the local administration to deal sternly with the miscreants and make every effort to tracks down terrorist along with those covertly aiding and abetting them. It cannot be denied that it is the drug mafia which is behind the current wave of crime in the city. This is evident from the fact that the law and order situation took a turn for the worse soon after the biggest-ever narcotics haul at Karachi in January last. The drug mafia wants to create chaos in the country in order to weaken the Government so that they can continue their nefarious activities unhampered. In the recent swoop on terrorists in Karachi, the police also found evidence to the effect that the present killings are a result of the gang warfare and those involved in it are supported and financed by drug barons. It is also learnt that three to four thousand terrorists are operating in the city. A detailed survey has estimated that 1.5 million illegal immigrants are living in Karachi many of whom may well be involved in the current acts of lawlessness. Now that six most wanted gang leaders involved in heinous crimes have been arrested, the police could well get clues which would help in tracking down other criminals. The Karachi police should relentlessly persist with its crackdown on terrorists and not rest until total peace has been restored in the financial capital of the country.

Editorial Views Karachi Violence

BK1503092395 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 14 Mar 95 p 7

[Editorial: "Two tracks on Karachi"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For the government the Karachi crucible is getting tougher by the day. The latest killings of nine members of the Haqiqi faction of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM] which came in the midst of the crescendo of official claims of cracking down on the perpetrators of trouble, proves this. The brazenness of the attackers and the supreme confidence with which they 'terminated' their 'targets' is ample evidence of their heartlessness. But it is also a reminder to the terrified public that the marked among them have nowhere to run, and cannot count on whatever protection they might expect from the law enforcement agencies. This contrasts sharply with the fiction that officialdom is desperately trying to build its power to control the spread of Karachi's killing fields. Since the assassination of the two members of the American Consulate last Wednesday, the government has been giving the impression of making fresh efforts to break the cycle of violence. There have been plenty of emergency meetings, hard-hitting statements, new, stern administrative directives, and various plans to shuffle and reshuffle key bureaucrats in the province. These measures have not had the desired salutary effect, and the situation has only worsened as evidenced by over three dozen deaths in the last four days. This is partially because of the lack of firm administrative action. It is pointless to ask the same officials, chief secretary, IG [Inspector General] Police etc, who have failed miserably to perform their duties to spruce up their act. They have to be replaced if any serious attempt is to be made at restoring even a semblance of order in Karachi.

Along with this, bold political initiatives are also needed. The administrative solutions that the government is applying, or those that are being considered such as the imposition of emergency and recalling the army under article 245 of the Constitution, even at their efficacious best are anodynes. Because of the limited nature of the aims they are programmed to achieve—restoring law and order by any means—they fail to address the deeper cause of the crisis in Karachi, the roots of which are political. These can be traced back to the differences that the MQM(A) leadership had with the Army when it supervised Operation Cleanup. It was Altaf Hussain's flight from the country and the ensuing deadlocks in govt [government]-MQM dialogue that really billowed sparks of violence into a veritable holocaust.

Any long-term solution to Karachi's troubles can only emerge from re-starting the process of political dialogue. This in turn means that Altaf Hussain's MQM will have to be accepted as a legitimate factor in Karachi's political equation and its demands, no matter how unpalatable, accorded due weightage. Efforts should also be made to mediate peace between the MQM(H) and MDQM(A) so that at least one aspect of the city's multi-dimensional trouble is taken care of.

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